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## Moon Moon Comes to Beacon Hills

by [RarePairFairy](#)

### Summary

This was meant to be crack but it turned into a story.

There's a New Guy mysteriously tearing up Beacon Hills, and Stiles has growing theories. Scott's mom and Allison's dad are getting along.

Derek really doesn't communicate very well. Isaac communicates plenty.

Someone turns into a werewolf ... or at least, a weresomething.

## Notes

So this is a fic within a fic. The chapters alternate between the sterek plot and the symbiotic relationship between Melissa McCall and Chris Argent (as a brotp, not an otp. I just want them to have brunch and bond over their kid's drama). The sterek chapters are the odd numbers, and the parent chapters are the even numbers.

^ THIS HAS CHANGED! after something like chapter 12, all chapters following have been Stiles-centric.

Being a mum or a dad in this show has got to be one of the most horrifying experiences. Not only does everyone seem to be a single parent, but they all have really difficult occupations.

Anyway, yes. I threatened I'd do it on tumblr, and here it is.

I HAVE HELPED MOON MOON TO INFILTRATE TEEN WOLF,  
AND I AM NOT SORRY.

# Chapter 1

The school day was less than half over, and there was a lull in general violence and life-threatening dangers, and Scott and Allison were pacifying each other in the physics section of the library, Erica and Boyd had fully healed up and were snuggling back at the den, and no-one in the room had particularly bad body odour or too much perfume. To Isaac, it was the closest to heaven he'd come in weeks.

Naturally he was on guard, because these things never last. He managed not to jump when Stiles barrelled in and made a beeline for him.

'I've been thinking,' Stiles said as he dropped himself in the opposite seat. Isaac took in the sight with a touch of alarm. He was a little pale, sweaty and breathing hard, and carried the scent of dead leaves with him. He must have run at least most of the way from the lacrosse pitch.

'Was it that traumatic?' Isaac managed to ask.

'Maybe,' Stiles said under his breath, leaning forward. Isaac didn't have to lean in to hear what Stiles said next, but he did so partially as a reflex and partially out of manners.

'Does this have to do with the new guy?'

"New Guy" was the nickname the pack had unanimously given to an odd scent trailing around Beacon Hills following a string of toppled dumpsters, frightened homeless people, broken windows, and trashed swimming pools. A skate park littered with pizza boxes and bits of cooked pizza dough with the topping missing had been the most recent unusual find. Even Deaton hadn't known what to make of it, so the whole pack was a little baffled and on edge.

'Sort of,' Stiles said. 'I had to tell someone. Where's Scott?'

‘With Allison,’ Isaac jabbed his thumb in the direction of the physics section. Stiles rolled his eyes and grunted, dropping his head on the table. ‘What is it?’ Isaac asked. If it was that bad, he ought to call Derek.

‘I have an idea who the new guy might be,’ Stiles said under his breath. Isaac tried to suss out the theory before it toppled out of Stiles’ mouth. Stiles wasn’t just nervous. He seemed hesitant and slightly embarrassed, as if he were about to confess something he’d done rather than something he’d figured out. This wasn’t his “I’ve an idea” face at all.

‘Stiles,’ Isaac growled, when Stiles hesitated a little too long. Stiles sucked in his bottom lip and popped it out again nervously.

‘Promise you’ll take me seriously,’ he murmured.

Isaac wanted to reach across the table to him. He had never heard Stiles ask anything like that, nor expect to ever hear it from him. It was pack consensus that half of what Stiles said wasn’t to be taken seriously, except for when he had an idea or figured something out, in which case he was probably on the right track. Derek had said so not too many nights ago, notably with the smell of Stiles all over the front of his body and through his hair and on his hands. Nobody had felt comfortable pointing out the obvious change in Derek’s demeanour, but the pair were keeping themselves more or less to themselves, so the resident werewolves, and Allison and Lydia, let them come out at their own pace.

At any rate Isaac assumed that Stiles knew better than to ask that he be taken seriously. He beat down his pride, and reached across the table to squeeze Stiles’ arm.

‘I’m listening,’ he said.

‘Okay. Because you know how Jackson couldn’t remember any of the stuff that happened when he was a kanima, and Lydia couldn’t remember those two days after Peter attacked her, and how Scott didn’t remember his first shift after he went running through the woods in his pajamas the night after he got bitten?’

‘Yeah,’ Isaac said dubiously.

‘Don’t be grossed out,’ Stiles warned, ‘but a couple of nights ago, Derek bit me.’

Isaac was struck dumb. He blinked, and opened his mouth, and shut it again.

That was the other general pack consensus about Stiles; he was their *human*. He was specifically Scott’s human, and while Derek had been forgiven by Scott for seducing Scott’s human, it was assumed that him biting Stiles and adopting him into the pack without some kind of formal exchange of ownership was a big no-no.

On top of that, this was the first time Stiles had personally mentioned Derek’s name to Isaac. It was like an initiation into Stiles’ life and a kick in the balls both in one.

‘Why didn’t you say anything?’ Isaac whispered. The physics section had gone oddly quiet. ‘Did you tell Scott?’

‘What? No. And dude, not like *that*, I mean ...’ the nervousness in Stiles’ voice returned, ‘I mean,’ he continued under his breath, ‘when we were making out. That’s why I said not to be grossed out. We were messing around, and he kind of bit my shoulder, and I didn’t say anything even though it stung a little because it was a huge turn-on at the time, but it felt like it broke the skin, but when I checked in the mirror the morning after there was no bite mark, and *you promised not to be grossed out*.’

Isaac stopped pretending to gag and frowned. ‘No I didn’t. You just *told* me not to gross out. False alarm,’ he said, slightly louder, to make sure Scott heard. He must have, because the soft sounds coming from the physics section resumed almost immediately. He felt oddly pleased, in a mildly icked sort of way, to be someone Stiles felt able to mention his relationship with Derek to. It was assumed that Stiles didn’t talk about personal things at all, unless it was to Scott, who was a safe brick wall about all feelings that didn’t involve Allison.

‘I could be a werewolf, this is a big freakin’ deal,’ Stiles hissed.

‘You couldn’t be a werewolf. You don’t smell like one.’

‘How do you know? There’s a whole table between us.’

Isaac stood, and made a point of approaching Stiles’ side of the table. He sat in the chair next to him and scooped closer until they were shoulder-to-shoulder, then he leaned in and inhaled deeply. Stiles stared at Isaac and leaned away, attempting to look disapproving.

‘Definitely human,’ Isaac said simply. ‘And anyway. If you were a werewolf, you wouldn’t break a sweat running to the library. Not even from the other end of the school.’

He stood, ignoring Stiles’ sounds of protest, and sauntered out of the library. He let himself gush a little when he was down the hall.

Stiles had told him first.

## Chapter 2

### Chapter Summary

I wanted to write "what's the worst that could happen?" in a crackfic to justify my ugly laughter.

‘I really don’t like this. However you look at it. The last time they ever really said anything to each other, your dad accused my mom of not raising me properly because I kidnapped you on your birthday.’

‘He wouldn’t have offered to take her to dinner unless he planned on being nice. He’s not hunting any more, remember? This is probably a peace offering, like a parent’s group for humans involved in the life of Beacon Hill’s werewolf population. As soon as Stiles’ dad finds out about you guys, they’ll all be going out and getting coffee together. But until then, your mom and my dad are just going to support each other.’

‘Yeah,’ Scott said hesitantly. ‘And I guess if he’s mean, she’ll probably go alpha-mom and put him in his place.’

‘Oh, I don’t know. Maybe he’d enjoy that too much.’

Scott pulled a face. Allison pulled a face back. ‘Don’t look so concerned,’ she said. ‘But you met my mom. My dad has this thing about strong women. His idea of initiating me into the hunting part of our family heritage was staging a kidnapping. And he once told me that all the horrible wars and things that ever happened were all started by men. If you’d seen his face at the time you’d know he totally believed it. He’s kind of a closet feminist.’

‘Okay,’ Scott said dubiously. ‘But I don’t want them to get along too well. Can you imagine? If they got together, you’d be my step-sister. We can’t let that happen.’

‘God forbid,’ Allison giggled. Scott tried to mirror her cheerfulness. ‘I guess, if they get too close, we could just tell my mom about how he tried to kill me. See how he likes her strength then.’

Allison couldn’t help giggling at the genuine anxiety in Scott’s voice. She threw her arms around his neck.

‘Come on, it’s just dinner,’ she said gently. ‘What’s the worst that could happen?’

## Chapter 3

Friday did nothing to assuage Stiles' nerves or replace them with relief or happiness. The rumour had travelled the pack that he thought he was becoming a werewolf, but Derek hadn't approached him about it so Stiles assumed he hadn't heard yet. Even if he had, Stiles didn't know what he would say.

They hadn't talked about whether or not they wanted to outwardly declare their whatever-it-was to the pack. It wasn't exactly a "relationship". Stiles wouldn't describe Derek as his boyfriend. Not that he didn't want to, but he didn't know what Derek wanted either. The first time they had kissed, Derek had said nothing. It was as if the kiss was something that had *happened*, like spontaneous combustion, the death of a star or a flash of lightning, rather than something that Derek had *done*. And then it had kept on happening, the occurrences slowly increasing in frequency and passion, always with no words being exchanged. Sometimes they even got off, although they hadn't gone further than mutual hand jobs.

Stiles was pretty sure it was a messed up situation but he couldn't bring himself to feel very unhappy about it. He was someone's booty call. He felt a tiny bit proud about it, in a self-deprecating sort of way. He was Derek's sordid, unspoken, semi-secret booty call.

It was even harder to feel unhappy about not having his feelings returned by his brooding alpha lover when he had the whole I-think-I'm-a-werewolf problem to cope with.

He had tried a few things, all of which had worked but none of which had reassured him, to prove himself wrong. He didn't respond to wolfsbane. Scott had sniffed him as well as Isaac (the back of his head when Stiles thought he wasn't paying attention), and when Allison agreed to press her silver-plated bracelet against his skin, he felt no discomfort.

But Stiles was, despite being a creature of logic, also a creature of superstition. One coincidence had popped into his head and refused to vacate.

He had based his first name on his last name. Technically his name was Stilinski Stilinski.

Who else had the same first name and last name? Who else was known for his derp, his quirky behaviour and his exclusion from the pack?

Moon Moon.

He didn't say anything to anyone about that. It sounded stupid when he said it out loud. But on top of the other coincidences, his love of pizza toppings, his fondness for swimming pools and his being asleep around the approximate times that "New Guy" had made his presence known by breaking parts of Beacon Hills, the evidence wasn't insignificant. He had left his window closed a few nights in a row as an experiment, and what did he discover in the morning?

Open windows.

He would be suspicious about his complete memory blank except for the fact that both Scott and Jackson had had memory gaps at first, as well as the fact that he was always insanely groggy in the mornings. He could turn off his alarm half-asleep, and more than once had found himself halfway down the hallway without remembering actually getting out of bed.

Quietly he seethed and grumbled into his cereal until his father gently prodded his shins with his foot under the table.

'Penny for your thoughts?'

Stiles glanced up and shrugged noncommittally. 'If you literally give me a penny I might tell you.'

'Sorry, I need the parking change today. They just rang in to let me know the lot at the station was found with two upturned cars laying lengthwise

across my space this morning.'

'Seriously?' Stiles said, abruptly sitting up straight and checking his dad's face for signs of a joke. The man looked as if his morning hadn't started the way he'd wanted it to.

'Thought that might cheer you up. It'd be funny to me too, if I literally didn't have to pay parking today.'

Stiles got dressed and drove to school surreptitiously checking himself for signs of having rolled two cars over. He didn't smell like engine oil and he felt no strain in his arms, but he had to be sure. As soon as he met Scott out the front of the school he asked if he smelled like someone else's car, which earned him an odd look.

'You smell like your car,' Scott answered unhelpfully. 'Is this about you thinking you're a werewolf? Because we'd be able to tell if you were,' he repeated.

'Maybe not. Maybe I'm turning into something weird, like Jackson,' Stiles said urgently. 'We still have that file we got off Gerard's usb drive, the bestiary, right? We ought to go through it to check –'

'No, Stiles,' Scott said firmly, landing both his hands on Stiles' shoulders. 'You're not turning into anything. We'd know already.'

The bell rang before Stiles had another chance to protest.

The day came and went at a snail's pace. He didn't get put in detention and he didn't get yelled at in chemistry. Lydia said hello to him in the hallway, and while his romantic intentions lay elsewhere, he did like to be on friendly terms with his old long-term crush. But the knowledge that his day was being ruined by something out of his control only made the day-ruining worse.

By the time he got home he was too dejected to go on skype or do his homework. He kicked off his shoes and had a long hot shower and flopped

into bed, after tetchily throwing on his most easily-shreddable pair of pajamas; an old flannel shirt and pants he had rediscovered in the back of his wardrobe. The elbows and knees were thin enough to be almost transparent and the bottoms of the pant legs were tatty where he had repeatedly stepped on them with his heels. Even the elastic inside the waistband had a weak spot where, if he pinched it, he could feel the thinness.

He had stopped wearing them the previous winter when they no longer kept him warm, but they would serve him tonight.

If he had any nocturnal adventures, he would sure as hell know come morning. And then, whatever it resulted in, he would have to tell his suspicions to Derek.

## Chapter 4

Scott opened the door at quarter to midnight and stood in the doorway with his arms crossed, tapping his foot. Melissa stared at him for nearly a full minute before bursting into hysterical laughter.

‘Aww, snowflake. You are *adorable*.’

‘You’re home late,’ Scott said pointedly.

‘I’m usually home late,’ Melissa said frankly, closing the door with her bare left foot, carrying her shoes in one hand and her handbag in the other. She padded into the kitchen, and he followed at her heels anxiously.

‘You’re usually working late. There’s a difference.’

‘I’m allowed to have fun on the nights I’m not working,’ she pointed out.

‘You had fun?’

‘Well don’t sound so unhappy about it. Yes, thanks for asking, even if it sounds like you’re accusing me of something. It turns out Chris Argent knows at least half the moves from Saturday Night Fever.’

‘You went *dancing*?’

Melissa dumped her bag on the counter and went to the fridge.

‘Yes, and after we went dancing we went to a diner for a snack, because we didn’t end up getting dessert at the restaurant, and that’s why I’m late. I thought you’d be glad I’m getting along with him. He’s Allison’s dad, I assumed it would, I don’t know. Help.’

Scott fumed at his inability to coherently state how not-okay it was that she went dancing with him.

‘But doesn’t that make it a date? You two went out to dinner, and then you went dancing. That’s how your generation goes on dates, isn’t it?’

Melissa straightened up, juice carton in her hand, and raised an eyebrow.

‘And to think, Captain Tact,’ she said slowly. ‘That you have a girlfriend.’

Scott crossed his arms again. ‘You two can’t date. That would make things, like, incestuous between me and Allison.’

Melissa rolled her eyes dramatically and carried the juice and her shoes and bag up to her room.

‘Ignoring how incredibly stupid, selfish and immature that last statement was,’ she said over her shoulder, ‘You have no reason to feel betrayed. Chris and I are friends with a capital Platonic. You can tell if I’m lying by my heart beat, right? So listen up,’ she reached the top of the stairs and looked down at him, matter-of-fact and reassuring. ‘We are one hundred per cent Just Friends. That’s all.’

Scott sighed with relief, earning an incredulous and slightly pitying smile from his mother.

‘That’s good. For a second I thought I was going to be Allison’s brother.’

Melissa laughed.

## Chapter 5

Disoriented, Stiles lethargically rolled himself awake and rubbed the sleep from his eyes. It was a few minutes before he remembered his experiment from the night before.

Sitting up slowly, he kicked off his rumpled doona, inspecting his pajamas for signs of vigorous physical activity. His heart dropped.

Right down the front of the shirt was a gaping rip, from the loose top button hole with a third of the threads missing, across to about two inches from his armpit. His left elbow was bare where a three-inch hole had appeared.

And the elastic in his pajama pants had broken.

Stiles pulled his knees up, wrapped his arms around his knees, and tucked his chin into his chest. He tried to clear his mind. This was what he wanted. Wasn't it? Even those times when he saw how rough it was on Scott, every now and again he found himself unfairly helpless, envious of the healing ability and the speed and the sheer awesomeness. Any situation, if looked at a certain way, would be improved by Stiles becoming a werewolf.

And maybe, just maybe, if he was a werewolf, it might bring Derek a little closer to him.

Stiles rubbed his face briskly on his thin sleeves and focussed on levelling out his breathing. He went to the window. It was open. The wind brought with it the scent of next door's blossom tree and a hint of cut grass from the house across the far side of the fence. Nothing smelled any sharper than it usually did.

Sometimes, a werewolf might take a shape that represents what they are really like inside. Derek had said that when they were dealing with lizard Jackson. So perhaps, he wasn't a wolf. Perhaps he was turning into

something that more closely resembled him. He didn't know how to feel about that.

He didn't know how to feel about any of it.

Stiles threw his pajamas to the end of the bed and padded to the bathroom in his underwear, mind racing. Should he go to Derek first, or Deaton? His head said Deaton the magic guru vet might be the wiser choice, but his heart said Derek. Standing under a warm spray of water and checking his body for bruises or scrapes, his heart was easier to listen to. He imagined the hands running over his ribs and sides and arms and legs were Derek's, not his own, and shut his eyes, and tried to feel happy. The Argents were no longer hunting in Beacon Hills. He was Derek's booty call. He was a were ... something.

He felt disjointed.

This time it was apple pie, not pizza-sans-topping, found strewn right down the middle of a main street. Stiles only found out because Isaac sent him a text. He was glad that Isaac wanted to include him at least, even if he would have preferred to get spontaneous texts from Derek. As things were, he had to be kept up to date by Scott or Lydia, and he made himself settle for appreciating being remembered by them.

Was neediness a symptom of becoming a were-something? Was he even being needy? Surely he was well within his rights to expect Derek to at least articulate his feelings and expectations. Or maybe, the fact that Derek hadn't brought feelings into it was a statement in itself. That was a depressing thought.

Stiles slapped himself and shook his arms as if he'd jumped out of a freezing pool. He was a were-something. *Bigger fish. Priorities.* A change of species was way more important than whether or not he was Derek's honey.

Which he wasn't.

*Dammit.*

# Chapter 6

## Chapter Summary

Fun Fact: Chris Argent still makes dog jokes about werewolves because he's a privileged upper-class white human male, but Melissa lets him think he's funny out of sheer mercy. I'm sure she's secretly planning to put dirt in his coffee at some point.

‘It’s not as if I’m waiting for him to shed on the furniture,’ Melissa said, dipping a seasoned potato wedge into the little container of aoli in the middle of the table. ‘I just worry about how it’s going to affect him later in life. I mean, obviously some werewolves can form pretty big families, so it’s not like he’ll be alone for the rest of his life, right?’

‘Big packs tend to draw attention to themselves,’ Chris cautioned, poking around in the bowl. ‘Although, if he learns to keep his head down and settles for a smaller family, there’s a chance he can live a more or less under the radar. And being acquainted with hunters early on, he’s had a chance to get familiar with hunting tactics and techniques. He’s more prepared than most werewolves his age.’

‘I guess I should thank you for that,’ Melissa said dryly. Chris, for something to do with his faced, scratched his nose and looked out the window. Melissa rested her chin on her hand. ‘How do you get used to it?’ she asked wearily. ‘I still feel like this is all wrong. I don’t know if I should be mad or what.’

‘There should be a parenting guide,’ Chris agreed. ‘With a whole chapter about teaching them to fetch their own laundry, and not to play dead when it’s time to do their homework, and roll over when you tell them to get out

of bed on a school morning.'

'And not to make messes in the house,' Melissa added. Chris snorted.

They ate the rest of the wedges in companionable silence, and when the waiter came to retrieve the bowls, they ordered coffee.

'When do you have to be at work?' Chris asked.

'I have another two hours,' Melissa said. 'Why do you ask?'

'I've heard something on the grapevine. Don't look at me like that, I'm out of the business. But my daughter is still very much a part of that world, and I like to keep tabs just to make sure she's okay.'

'Fair enough,' Melissa said dubiously. 'What have you heard?'

'I don't know how much your son keeps you in the loop, but there's a new player in town. No-one has any concrete evidence who or what it is, but the most likely candidate is a werewolf, and not necessarily an out-of-towner. Whoever they are, they aren't running with Derek.'

'Werewolves who operate on their own are called omegas, isn't that right?'

'Keeping tabs yourself?'

'I like to keep up to date, make sure I can talk to Scott about these things. Thanks for letting me know.'

'Any strange injuries come into the hospital, you make sure to return the favour.'

Melissa gave Chris a knowing look. 'Of course. You weren't just being nice and giving me a heads-up, were you.'

Chris offered a semi-innocent smile, and offered to take the bill.

'Let's split it,' Melissa offered, and no more was said about it.

## Chapter 7

He only saw one car every minute or so. It felt odd to be at the vet's so early in the morning, before even Scott got there. Stiles didn't even know if Scott worked on weekends.

When Deaton arrived, Stiles could see his alarmed expression through the windshield. He must have looked more haggard than he felt, because Deaton was out of the car almost as soon as he parked, breakfast and coffee in a paper bag and a paper cup. He too looked as if he had been awake all night.

'What's happened?' he asked.

'I'm a something,' Stiles said immediately. As soon as Deaton opened his barely smiling mouth, Stiles held up his hands.

'No. Let me finish. I have proof.'

Deaton closed his mouth, and looked Stiles over. He opened the door, putting his breakfast aside.

'Talk to me.'

'No, wait. You talk to me first,' Stiles said. Deaton had a slight limp, and Stiles saw a bandage poking out from just above his white sock. 'What happened to you?'

'I got in something's way last night,' he said cryptically. Stiles gave him a look.

'Something big, that came around the corner carrying a pizza box, and bowled me over on his way into the woods.'

Stiles groaned. 'That was me.'

Deaton frowned. 'No, Stiles, I really don't think it was. I don't know if you've noticed, but only alphas increase in size, and that's when they're fully shifted. This thing was bigger than you. Broader.'

'That still fits with my theory,' Stiles said. 'I don't think I'm a normal werewolf. I think I'm ... something else.'

Deaton turned his back, looking disbelieving, and rolled up his sleeves. As he reached up to a shelf for a manila folder, Stiles saw there was a scrape on his elbow as well. He winced.

'I'm sorry.'

'Stiles, it *wasn't* you.'

'It was. Trust me. I can feel it.'

'Are you going through the normal processes of transformation? Are you hearing or smelling things you're not used to? Are you displaying above-average strength or speed?'

'No, but we already know it's not the same for everyone. Like I said, I'm turning into something else, and I need your help to figure out what it is.'

Deaton sighed and rubbed his head. 'All right. Just calm down, and show me your proof.'

Stiles started from the beginning, leaving out Moon Moon and intimate circumstances of getting bitten. He repeated the incidences of the windows, and showed his torn pajamas (which he had folded and stuffed in the bottom of his bag).

Deaton refrained from giving anything away by his expression, but Stiles could tell he was thinking it over. That was enough to assume he was coming around to the fact that, at least, something was happening to him.

'What you've said is cause for concern, I agree,' Deaton finally said. 'But, I'm going to have to ask you to wait until I can be sure.'

‘Wait? Wait why?’

‘I was quick enough to get a sample from whoever knocked me over last night. I’m going to check it against the fibres on these,’ he held up the pajamas, ‘and if they come back matching, we’ll know for sure. That will at least give us something concrete to work from. So until I’ve done that, don’t act on what you think you know, all right?’

Stiles bit his bottom lip and dropped his head. He had already called Derek before setting off for the vet’s to say he had news. The urgency and intent in his voice must have registered, because Derek promised straight away to meet him at noon in the woods near Hale house. If he went and had to make up an excuse, Derek would get suspicious, and Derek had ways to make Stiles talk. He had ways to make Stiles make all sorts of noises.

‘Just to be safe,’ Deaton said gently. ‘You said you can’t actually remember any nocturnal wanderings, right?’

‘I also said that I never remember anything that happens when I’m only half-awake.’

‘Stiles.’

Stiles looked up. He could feel his shoulders sagging, but swallowed his nerves all the same.

‘I won’t do anything rash,’ he swore. ‘Just ... get back to me as soon as you can. As soon as possible.’

‘As soon as I’ve got the results,’ Deaton said.

Fine. Good. Now all Stiles had to do was find an excuse not to tell Derek what he had urgently said he needed to say. Easy peasy.

Or not.

## Chapter 8

‘Cleanup on aisle six,’ Melissa said in her best sing-song voice. It came out sounding a little reedy, but who could blame her? She’d been at work all night, and thanks to her and Scott’s juice addiction (and the lack of any kind of breakfast food in the house), she’d had to go grocery shopping first thing in the morning after two hours of sleep.

Chris Argent turned abruptly, nearly backing into the front of Melissa’s trolley. He didn’t look much better than she did.

‘Morning,’ he replied. The circles under his eyes only stood out more under his half-hearted smile.

‘Jesus, what happened to you? You look like you didn’t get a wink.’

‘I know. Allison said the same thing before I left the house.’

‘I don’t get it, I thought you were a night-owl.’

‘So did I. I thought I slept pretty well last night, but apparently not. How about you?’

‘Does it show?’ Melissa asked, knowing perfectly well that it did. She was in tracksuit pants and ug boots, for god’s sake and her hair must look like a bird’s nest, and not the fashionable kind.

‘Work keeping you busy?’ he asked.

‘You know it.’

They fell into an easy rhythm, apparently seeking at least half the same food items.

‘So it was your daughter who introduced him to spaghetti dinosaurs. I just

*knew* it wasn't a childhood regression thing.'

'Everyone has a favourite snack. Microwaved twinkies, isn't it?'

'Okay, for the record, he didn't get that from me.'

'On that note though, sometimes I wonder exactly how the sheriff manages to keep his kid eating properly. I hear Stiles has been insisting on making him eat rabbit food.'

'Well, Stiles likes for his father to have a healthy diet. It's understandable, they are close, and his job involves at least as much blood and crazy people as mine does. Not to mention the hours.'

Chris nodded and hummed, and Melissa thanked god she had a friend who could just nod and hum without frowning at her and saying "you poor thing."

As they went along, Melissa fell into thought. One of the things she had noticed was how easy it was to learn about someone by something as simple as their garbage, or their lounge room. Or their shopping.

'You're not used to doing the groceries, are you?' she asked, after a moment of debating whether or not to mention it. To be fair to him, he had the basics; toilet paper, bread, milk, a couple of apples and bananas, a couple of frozen dinners.

'Does it show?' he asked, sounding a little sardonic. Melissa looked sympathetic. Chris pursed his lips, then looked at his trolley. 'I haven't had to do the shopping myself until pretty recently. It wouldn't be fair to ask Allison to do it, and now that we're out of the business,' he stopped for a moment, then shrugged, as if deciding it was all right to tell her. 'Well, we're no longer in the family business, so we don't exactly have as much family as we used to.' He looked at her again, and gave her another of those quietly resigned, not-smiling smiles.

Melissa didn't try to return it. She was many things, but a bad friend was

not one of them. Anyway, she was a nurse. She dealt with hurt people every day.

‘I’ll help you with the fruit and vegetables if you help me find the disinfectant,’ she said instead. Without replying, Chris turned his trolley and trundled along beside her to find the Dettol.

When they were done, and unpacking the groceries into their cars in the parking lot (as it turned out, they had parked their cars across the row from each other), Chris tossed a tin of spaghetti dinosaurs to Melissa. She caught it with a slight fumble, and grinned in thanks.

‘For the vegetables.’

‘Remember to soak the lentils first,’ she reminded him. Chris closed the boot of his four wheel drive and leaned back against it. ‘It was hard enough being a parent before I had to cook.’

‘You find the time. Anyway, it’s not meant to be easy. We’re not superheroes. But I don’t think we have to be,’ Melissa replied, putting away the last bag and fishing in her pocket for her car keys. Chris cocked his head.

‘Well *we* might have to be, but we’re special cases,’ Melissa admitted. ‘But that’s not always what they need. Sometimes it’s really simple.’

‘How is it simple?’ Chris asked, scoffing.

‘It’s not like they need us to fight dinosaurs and aliens every day,’ Melissa said frankly. ‘Sometimes it’s as simple as being there. We’re their last line of defence. The job of a parent is to be there, regardless of what’s going on. So they know they’re never alone.’

Chris looked at Melissa for a long while, which she supposed would have been less embarrassing if she hadn’t lost her keys and was hunting her pants, her jacket and even her ugg boots for them.

‘You sound like you’ve really thought this through,’ he said eventually.

‘Yeah, well,’ she said, finding the keys in the boot in one of the shopping bags. ‘I sort of hid when I found out about Scott. It was too much. But I think that was when he needed me the most.’

‘You can’t be blamed for being surprised, or scared,’ Chris said defensively. She shrugged.

‘He’s an omega. I don’t know a lot about animals, but I know there’s no such thing as a lone wolf. There’s such a thing as a wolf searching for a pack, but they’re not meant to be alone. Neither is a child who still has a mother or father around. Scott needs me to be there for him, doubly so now that I know what he is.’

Chris went silent again, and didn’t look away from Melissa. She pursed her lips, and gestured to the open door and the steering wheel. He nodded, which she supposed was permission to leave awkwardly, so she got into the car and backed out of the space.

Chris sat in the drivers’ seat, but he didn’t start the engine.

*We’re their last line of defence. The job of a parent is to be there, regardless of what’s going on. So they know they’re never alone.*

*Scott needs me to be there for him, doubly so now that I know what he is.*

He wondered why it had taken so long for him to reconcile the wolf and the boy in his mind, when all that this woman needed was to remind her self that Scott was her son. His questions to his daughter replayed in his mind. Would he have come so soon to Allison’s defence if she had been bitten? How long would it have taken to reconcile the hunter and the parent? What would his final determination have been?

What would he have done?

## Chapter 9

‘You might want to tell him why I found your DNA on his pajamas,’ Deaton said before Derek reached for the doorhandle. Derek froze.

‘Feel free to come in. The mountain ash only works when I close the little wooden door at the front here.’

Derek stalked into the room, and ignored the fresh sting that accompanied the familiar smell of Stiles’ skin and sleep-sweat on the pajamas sitting on the counter.

‘Stiles said he figured out who the new guy is,’ Derek said bluntly. ‘Can you confirm it?’

‘Care to tell *me* why I found your DNA on his pajamas?’ Deaton asked casually, ignoring Derek’s question. Derek fumed silently where he stood.

‘That’s none of your business,’ he said finally, when Deaton’s sublimely un-bothered expression became expectant.

‘You both made it my business,’ Deaton said. ‘I need to get in contact with Stiles, and he’s not answering his phone. I can only assume that he went to talk to you.’ Deaton became stern at Derek’s stubborn silence, and crossed his arms. Derek noted a bruise on his forearm, and a scab on his elbow. ‘You must know what this looks like.’

‘Aside from me sleeping with an underage teenager? Can you confirm whether he was right about who he suspected, or not?’ Derek said impatiently. He knew, deep down, he ought to feel ashamed or apologetic. He did. Just not for touching Stiles.

He felt ashamed for letting Stiles say goodbye and drive away. He felt ashamed for leaving layers of charred wood and broken windows between

them when he should have closed the distance. He felt ashamed for not swallowing his angry pride and saying sorry. He felt ashamed for letting Stiles call it off without putting up a fight. Without even opening the fucking door. And it still stung.

Deaton examined Derek closely, then decided that it wasn't worth the battle.

'He's safe,' Deaton said. Derek released a breath he hadn't realized he was holding. 'But he was closer than I suspected. For his sake, you need to follow my instructions until this is all sorted out. And while we're on the subject, eventually you'll want to work out how to explain to Mr Stilinski why I found particles of you all over these pajamas.'

### *EARLIER THAT DAY ...*

Stiles sat in his car for ten minutes before he felt able to approach the spot Derek had agreed to meet him. He felt jittery, like stage fright. As he walked, he wondered why.

'I could hear your heart pounding from thirty feet away,' Derek whispered. Stiles nearly jumped right out of his skin, feeling the tickle of Derek's breath on his neck.

'Fuck! Don't *do* that!' he squeaked, spinning on his heels and nearly toppling over. Derek smirked with his eyebrows raised, and Stiles knew straight away that it was exactly the response he had wanted.

'Do you have to give me a heart attack every time? Jeez,' he said, scrabbling for some degree of normalcy.

He hadn't, in the time between leaving the vet and driving to the woods, been able to think of any excuse other than "I just need to get something confirmed before I can tell you my urgent urgent news". If Derek pushed

his buttons, he would tell him everything. He couldn't *not*. But what happened if, by some miracle, Deaton gave him a conflicting report at the end of the day? Stiles would be humiliated and look like an idiot, and that was the best case scenario. He couldn't figure out why Derek was sleeping with him now, but he could feel how thin the ice was under his feet.

'You had something to tell me,' Derek prompted, and Stiles swallowed, watching Derek track the movement of his adam's apple, and tried to compose himself. *Down boy.*

'I had something to tell you,' Stiles repeated, 'and then, funniest thing, I talked to somebody, and it turns out I might need a little more time.'

Derek looked like it was the last thing he wanted to hear. He glowered. Stiles flinched. He hadn't expected immediate anger.

'More time?' Derek said through his teeth. 'You seemed pretty damn sure of what you wanted to say on the phone this morning.'

'Yeah, well, that was before I actually got a second opinion.'

Derek turned and started to stalk in the direction of the house. Stiles, cautiously, trotted along after him. He didn't notice until they reached the porch that Derek was opening and closing his fists.

'You're angrier than I expected,' Stiles said baldly. 'Listen, I'll have something definite to tell you later today, I just came in person rather than calling out of consideration. I just need for you to wait a little longer, that's all.'

'I've done my share of waiting,' Derek growled. Stiles tripped back a step.

'I don't want you to decide how you feel based on what someone else says,' Derek said, heading for the door. 'Next time you think it's important to tell me something, make sure it's actually something important, and not some teenage crush drama. I'm sick of it.'

'Wait, what?' Stiles asked, thrown for a loop. 'What did you *think* I came

here to tell you?’

Derek glared mutely at Stiles. The stand-off, with Derek standing at his door and Stiles at the bottom of the porch, made the physical gap between them wider, and suddenly it hit him.

*Teenage crush drama.*

‘Wait, you thought I came here to ... what, ask you to make it official?’ Stiles asked incredulously. ‘And that ... hold on a second, that doesn’t count as *important* to you?’

Derek threw his hands up. ‘No, what? What did you come here to talk about, if not that?’

‘Can you answer my question?’ Stiles asked.

‘I don’t have to answer anything. You came to me,’ Derek said sharply.

Stiles could practically see Derek backpedalling like crazy, and it only fanned the spark growing in his brain.

‘You owe it to me at least to tell me what you meant by that, if you’re going to get standoffish about it,’ Stiles said. Derek snorted. Stiles narrowed his eyes. ‘What, is it inconvenient for me to talk about it now? I didn’t realize this subject was a no-fly zone, or are my feelings not important unless your dick’s in my hand?’

‘No, I meant—’

‘You meant what, you meant that that’s not what this is? Well fine, since it’s come up, yeah, I do actually really like you. Yeah, I want to be more than just some casual hook-up, but maybe I *already know* you don’t want the same thing I do, and that it’s stupid for me to even want to commit and make this a serious thing because honestly, if it was going to be a serious thing, it already would be. But you know what, that’s fine. At the end of the day, I don’t care. Whatever you want to give, even if it’s just grinding up against me every now and again as some ego boost, power play, whatever it

is, then I'll take it. Even if it makes me feel like I'm whoring myself out, I'll take anything over nothing,' Stiles said, and he became aware that he was nearly shouting and he had started to sound desperate, but now that he had started he found he couldn't stop. It all came out at once. The neurotic fears, the anger and the sadness of finally knowing. Of having it confirmed. However bad it hurt not having tried, Derek did not think it was important.

'I knew better than to *try* to ask that you give me that chance,' Stiles snapped, and he had never actually articulated that thought, but there it had been. Knowing better. And now there it was, all of the insecurity, laid out for Derek to see and it was like a huge bruise on his leg he had managed to ignore, but now he had bumped it on something, and the hurt was flaring up.

'Is that how you see me?' Derek asked. His hands were balled into fists again, and his normally intense expression had become pure molten.

'How else am I supposed to see you?' Stiles spat back. 'What else have you shown me?'

Derek turned around and opened the door. 'Apparently nothing,' he replied, and went into the house, and shut the door hard behind him.

Stiles stood out the front of the house for some time, physically holding himself still. His heart had barely stopped pounding since he'd stopped his car but the reason had changed entirely. Where there were taut nerves, those nerves were now frayed and shattered. Within himself he gingerly made an inventory of his injuries. The numbness that came with the adrenaline was being replaced with aches and shakes, and he could feel every single one.

The butterflies in his stomach had become wasps.

He hadn't even come to talk about his feelings. He had only come to ask Derek to wait.

He hadn't even *wanted* to talk about his feelings.

‘I get that you’re probably sick of the sound of my voice now,’ he said darkly. He knew Derek could hear him. He took some comfort in the fact that he didn’t have to look him in the face, stand in front of him, to say what he felt he needed to say. He was willing to offer an olive branch for the sake of having the last word. ‘I just wanted you to know, I didn’t ever plan to ask you for a relationship. And I wasn’t trying to blame you for anything. I know with the arrangement we’ve got, you probably never meant to hurt me. I just ... I ...’

He pulled his hand into his sleeve and pressed it to his face, hoping frantically that Derek couldn’t smell tears from inside his house.

‘I only wanted to tell you something I’d figured out about New Guy,’ he said, and with that he had to fight down a sobbing laugh. It was sad, tragic, ridiculous enough. But he fought it down, because one lot of hysterics was enough for one day. He wasn’t about to lump looking pathetic on top of looking like a desperate teen closet case.

‘I just thought I might know who it was. I spoke to Deaton after calling you, and he told me to give him time to confirm it. That was all I wanted to talk to you about, I swear. But if you want to call it all off, I’ll understand. That whole word-vomit-feelings-thing, that was ... I didn’t mean to accuse you of being an asshole. I just didn’t expect to hear ...’

*That you really truly don’t care.*

‘I just didn’t know that you saw it as a teenage crush drama.’ *Fuck, that sounded bitter.* ‘Or that you thought I wanted to talk about turning it into a real relationship. It sort of caught me by surprise. I guess I just wasn’t ready to hear that. But anyway, what I mean is, I get it if you’re turned off. And we’re not exactly made for each other anyway. It’s okay with me. Advantage of being a teenager, we bounce back. Crying or not, when it comes down to it, we’re pretty fucking bulletproof.’

*I have never lied harder in my whole life and he knows it.*

‘So ... yeah. I’ll consider this closure. Bye, Derek.’

Every step he took back to his jeep was a cord snapping, pulling away from ropes around his bleeding heart and his gutted insides, and as he drove away he waited until he was at the road before he turned the windscreen wipers on. For all the good they did.

# Chapter 10

## Chapter Notes

So, yeah ... wow. This went from crack to mystery/romance/drama before I really had time to change the tone ... I hope you're enjoying it anyway '-\_-

Stiles was sure his father understood the moment he walked in the door and didn't say hello. An unusually sensitive hug, but no asking if he was okay. No offer to stay with him, just the mute understanding that he would be back home soon to get ready for going out with Scott and Allison's parents. No attempt to tell Stiles that whatever it was, he'd be fine. As if he somehow just knew. As if he could see it in Stiles' face.

There was no cure for this. Not right now.

.

Allison sat bolt upright on her bed, sending her chemistry notebook fluttering to the floor. A piercing sound shot straight through her. She didn't know what it was coming from, or who, or where. But she knew why. It sounded heartbroken.

'Don't be ridiculous,' she muttered to herself. She had gotten over her poetry phase. But something deep inside tugged at her heart, and instinctively she knew. This noise carried on like a helpless animal, and the part of Allison that still secretly wanted a pony and a kitten wanted nothing more than to find it, reassure it, tell it that everything was going to be okay eventually. At the same time she knew it would be better to leave the creature to itself. There was power to be found in people who learned to

cope alone, as much as it pricked at her soul to think so.

.

‘Do you hear that?’ Melissa asked sharply, sitting straight as a rod in her seat. Scott caught onto the sound a second later, and put down his fork.

‘Howling,’ he said thoughtfully.

‘Does howling always sound like that?’ Melissa asked softly. Scott listened intently.

‘No,’ he said. ‘I haven’t heard any werewolf sound like that.’

‘It sounds so ... stop me if this sounds ridiculous,’ Melissa said haltingly. ‘It just sounds ... jeez, I hope whoever it is feels better by the time me and the guys go out tonight.’

To Scott it didn’t sound like an ordinary werewolf howl at all. There was no message in it. No question, no warning or alarm, the way he could usually read into a howl. It didn’t even sound like a proper howl. More like a guttural yowling, or a cat snarling at a threatening dog.

‘Whoever it is, they must be pretty unhappy. Are you sure it’s not a cry for help? Maybe someone out there is in pain,’ Melissa said alertly. Scott felt a little touched. He was always pleased when his mother came to see him at lacrosse, and this was similar. To know she had overcome her initial shock at his true identity, to the degree that she fully embraced it and took an interest, cared about other werewolves outside of Scott, was gratifying beyond words.

‘Maybe they are,’ Scott said. ‘But not physical pain. This just sounds ...’

‘Sad,’ Melissa finished for him.

‘Yeah.’

They sat with their forks set down on the table, heads turned to the

mournful cry, afraid to break the sanctity of the moment. There was something in that sound. They let it echo on uninterrupted, and only went back to their dinner when it finally ceased, carried away on the wind like a dead leaf.

# Chapter 11

## Chapter Notes

I want you to yell "DUN DUN DUUUUUUNNNNN" as soon as you finish this chapter.

‘You boys have fun.’

Isaac lifted his head and smiled politely.

‘You too, Sheriff Stilinski.’

Stiles rolled his eyes and his dad waved as he headed for the front door. It would be the first night out not-at-work he had had in some time, so Stiles was inclined to be happy for him, but according to Scott and Allison, it was going to be spent with the Beacon Hills Parents and Friends of Werewolf Babies Support Group, and he could only dread what might result.

Stiles had wanted to press Scott into keeping him company. But Scott was taking the opportunity to sneak over to his girlfriend’s house and play hanky panky, and he’d resent Stiles for getting in the way of that golden opportunity, and Stiles didn’t think he could handle resentment right now.

Isaac had agreed to come over instead for games and pizza. If nothing else, on a practical level, at least Stiles would be in the company of another strong supernatural being who could stop him from hurting anybody, in the event that he turned. Into whatever he turned into.

Aside from that, although Stiles did not acknowledge this even to himself, Isaac could tell the moment he stepped into the house that something was

cutting Stiles up inside. With a quick but tender cuddle upon greeting him out the front of the house, Isaac had said without words something that no-one had managed to communicate to him for what felt like a very long time.

*You don't have to say anything. But I'm here.*

When they sat down in front of the big TV where they could fit themselves, the console and the pizza boxes, it actually felt like a proper guy's night in, something Stiles had seen very little of since his first year of high school.

Gaming with a werewolf, however, was not something Stiles expected to be easy, nor consistently fun, a dread that was confirmed after the first three games of Mario Kart.

'I haven't played this in ages,' Isaac said happily, nudging Stiles' car into a wall and veering ahead to take first place.

A knock at the door gave Stiles an excuse to pause the game. For a tentatively cheerful moment he wondered if Scott had decided to be a good friend and come over after all, but when he opened the door, it was Boyd and Erica, not Scott and Allison, who nudged him on the arm and pecked him on the cheek upon sauntering in.

'You guys are late,' Isaac called from the next room.

'You only ordered four pizzas? Dude, call the delivery guy, I want mushroom and cheese.'

'Wait, what?' Stiles stuttered, skidding to the doorway where Erica was reaching up to peck Isaac on the cheek as Boyd settled into an arm chair.

'You invite one, you invite all. We're here to keep you company, lil' buddy,' Erica said cheerfully.

'I called them,' Isaac admitted, and while he didn't sound especially proud, he didn't sound guilty. It was perfectly natural for him, Stiles supposed. This was their pack. They were always together. But that wasn't what he had been asking for when he invited Isaac over.

The three of them together made him feel like an outsider. Like the odd one out. He didn't feel comforted, no more than he felt threatened by them anymore. He just felt like he didn't belong.

'I'll call the delivery guy,' he said, turning and heading for the hallway where the cordless phone was, because he couldn't kick them out. He felt drained all of a sudden.

He'd play host to Derek's pack, and he'd lose all the games, and he'd be whatever he was even if it was some weird marauding purposeless B-grade kanima and he'd take the hand he was dealt, because what else could he do? How do you fight when everyone is better than you? How do you fight when there's no-one to punch or kick or shout at?

How do you fight against isolation?

He took the phone off the hook on the wall, someone's arms slid around his waist.

'You're not okay, are you?' Erica asked quietly.

'Did you say mushroom or meatlovers?' Stiles asked. He didn't say anything else. Erica tightened her grip a little, and rested her cheek on his shoulder.

Someone placed their hand on his back, and all of a sudden Stiles was in the middle of a standing puppy pile, with Isaac gently taking the phone away and Boyd's arms reaching all the way around both him and Erica. He ought to have gotten mad, told them he wasn't a child, pushed them away, but he just didn't want to. He needed whatever this was. He needed love. No sex, no evading, no lying, no misunderstandings, no talking, no yelling, no drinking or dismissing, no begrudging affection. He just wanted to be held by someone who cared.

Somehow he wound up wrapped in a blanket, with Isaac's head in his lap playing space invaders on his phone, as Boyd stood at the front door paying

the pizza man with the money the three betas had contributed from their own wallets and Erica went through his games collection.

‘How can you not have Portal? You have Silent Hill and Bioshock, you’ve got to have Portal. If I don’t find Portal in here you’re no longer my geek friend.’

‘Dude, next time, we are not getting large. I don’t know about you guys but I’m broke, and these things are not worth nine bucks each.’

Isaac nudged Stiles’ leg. ‘You’re allowed to talk, you know. If you need to,’ he murmured.

Stiles shook his head. ‘Not about ...’ he didn’t put it into words. He wasn’t going to admit that he was bawling on the inside because he broke up with Derek when they weren’t even really in a relationship. He changed the subject. He couldn’t think about that without it hurting his head. So he vented his spleen on his other big problem.

‘Okay. So I found proof that I’m probably New Guy,’ Stiles blurted. Erica dropped the game she’d been holding. Boyd choked on his pizza. Isaac wriggled up so quickly that his shoulder dug into Stiles’ belly.

‘Say what??’ Erica barked.

‘Too many coincidences adding up. And don’t say I don’t smell like a werewolf, because there’s more to it than that,’ Stiles said sharply, pinching Isaac’s arm.

He explained his piece to the three, who began to gaze at him with a renewed sort of interest and attention. He tried not to feel relieved that they weren’t inching away. If anything, Erica looked a little bit excited, and Isaac was leaning into him as if he was trying with all his senses to figure out what, if not a werewolf, Stiles was.

By the time he heard his phone ringing, Stiles was regretting a little having brought it up.

‘About time you picked up your phone. I have some news, and you might not like it,’ Deaton said, before Stiles had a chance to say “hello”. He groaned.

‘Just tell me. Rip it off like a bandaid,’ Stiles said. Isaac and Erica leaned forward with interest, and Stiles rolled his eyes, mouthing at them to back off.

‘Are you with anyone at the moment?’

‘I’m with Derek’s pack, why?’

‘Are they all with you?’

‘Yes.’

‘Good. Stay with them.’

‘So was the sample on the pajamas the same as it was on the sample you took?’

‘That’s just it. It’s not *exactly* the same.’

Boyd raised his eyebrows, then narrowed them. Stiles balked. ‘Not exactly? So, does that mean chemicals and stuff change to animal when ...’

‘No, you misunderstand my meaning,’ Deaton interrupted. ‘I mean, the DNA *is* similar, but not for the reason you think. There was animal hair—’

‘What kind of animal?’ Stiles asked, perhaps too quickly. So what, he was allowed to know what kind of animal he was.

‘Stiles,’ Deaton interrupted firmly. ‘Aside from the animal hair, the samples show. Two. Different. Types. Of DNA.’

Isaac shrugged and pulled a confused face, while Boyd and Erica looked at each other and then back at Stiles. Stiles frowned.

‘In plain English, dude,’ he finally said. He could almost hear Deaton’s frustration.

‘Stiles, I hate to tell you over the phone, but this is a deeply serious situation. Now I need you to tell me. *Is your father home?*’

## Chapter 12

Chris Argent received a text message.

‘Finally,’ he sighed, pulling out his phone.

‘Does he say why he’s late?’ Melissa asked, before her own phone started buzzing in her pocket. Chris looked up from the text he was reading, a baffled and suspicious expression on his face. ‘How does *Stiles* even have my number?’

‘Hello?’ Melissa said, shrugging at Chris as Stiles’ voice appeared on the other end of the line. He sounded hurried and frazzled, as if he had been running. The background noise told her that he was in a car.

‘Hey, is my dad with you guys? He’s not answering his phone.’

‘What? No. We’ve been waiting for him for about fifteen minutes. Has something happened? Should we call the station?’

Chris, at the look on Melissa’s face, got out his phone again.

‘No, no, absolutely not. This is a code fuzzy situation, trust me, we don’t want the authorities involved.’

Melissa raised her eyebrows, then waved her hand and shook her head as Chris held up the 911 dialled into his phone. ‘Did you just say “code fuzzy”?’

‘Yes I did, how quickly can you get to the vet from where you are now?’

‘The vet? Why do we need to see the vet?’

Chris crossed his arms and looked intrigued.

‘We’ll meet you there. Just hurry.’

Melissa, baffled, pocketed her phone and told Chris what Stiles had said.

“‘We’ is probably going to mean our kids, and possibly Derek’s pack as well,’ Chris said, opening the passenger door for Melissa. ‘Crises tend to involve all of them at once.’

‘This is not how I’d like to picture a spontaneous family night out with my son,’ Melissa grumbled. ‘I hope it’s nothing too serious.’

‘If the vet’s involved, it’s probably serious,’ Chris warned. Melissa scrutinized his expression for any sign of a joke, but found none. ‘I’m feeling again like the last one to know,’ she muttered.

They were shortly being greeted at the door of the vet’s office by Deaton, who ushered them in to see three teenagers and Stiles already sitting on various surfaces in the waiting area. Scott and Allison had arrived earlier in Allison’s car, and meekly went to sit with their parents at opposite ends of a table when they walked in the door.

When everyone was paying attention, Deaton went to the front of the to address them all.

‘To begin with, you are all tonight members of a search party. You’re all familiar, of course, with the Sheriff.’

‘I’m not sure how to feel about that statement,’ Boyd muttered.

‘Sheriff Stilinski is out there somewhere, and not as you know him. I might as well cut to the chase. At some point in recent months, he was bitten or somehow changed into a werewolf.’

‘Is there a reason Derek isn’t here but his pack is?’ Chris interjected. Melissa glanced at him. It was a good point.

‘He didn’t bite the sheriff, if that is what you’re asking,’ Deaton said coolly. ‘He’s already gone out looking. To get back on topic, the sheriff is not yet

aware of his true nature, but he is prone to spontaneous transformation. These transformations, as far as we know, are restricted to the night.'

Melissa blinked hard, and rubbed her temples. Everyone these days. She was genuinely starting to feel left out.

'Derek is patrolling the nearby woodland areas. The sheriff is most likely somewhere in town, but in the event he travels outside of Beacon Hills, Derek will call it in.'

Melissa didn't miss the very slight change in Stiles' countenance at the mention of Derek's name, nor the way Isaac let his arm fall back to rest atop the back of Stiles' chair, a small subtle comfort.

Melissa, Chris, Allison and Scott were assigned to search the rural parts of Beacon Hills in their cars. On foot, Erica, Isaac and Boyd would be covering the more densely trafficked inner parts of town. Stiles, being the only one the sheriff was likely to respond positively to, or even possibly return to human form for, would be in his jeep, searching the roads like the McCalls and the Argents, ready to respond on his phone to anyone who found his father first.

Deaton had changed into a slightly heavier jacket and had packed a couple of things into a black bag – small jars, a syringe, what looked like blow darts, a little paper box – and although he didn't say where he planned to look, everyone in the room assumed without question that he knew what he was doing.

He took Melissa and Chris aside just before letting everyone leave, and shut them into the office.

'No-one can hear us from the other side of this door, I've made sure of it,' was the first thing he said, which set Melissa slightly on edge, even more so when she saw how much more relaxed it made Chris.

'What do we need to know that's so secret?' she asked.

‘I know you’re planning to lend Ms McCall your daughter’s car so the two of you can search with your own children, thereby keeping them focussed on the mission at hand and not each other,’ Deaton said to Chris. Chris confirmed it without bothering to ask how obvious he had been.

‘I want you to swap places.’

‘*What?*’ they gaped simultaneously.

‘I’ll have to ask you to trust me. Chris, I need you and Scott on the same team for this. After you’ve circled the town once, I want you both to drive to the outskirts of town, near the preserve. Whether or not you get a call.’

‘Where Derek’s supposed to be patrolling?’ Chris checked.

‘Yes. Your kids will understand.’

‘Hang on,’ Melissa cut in. ‘So the plan’s changed since we left the waiting room. Why? We’re still looking for the sheriff, aren’t we?’

‘If circumstances had allowed, I’d like to have done this differently, I just want you to know that.’

‘I don’t care what you’d like, I want to know what you need us to do,’ Melissa said with prompt impatience. Chris tilted his head in her direction, an expression on his face that read “what she said”.

‘In the event that you see *this* creature,’ Deaton said, holding up a printout for them both to see, ‘don’t call Stiles. Call me. I need Scott’s abilities and your aim,’ Deaton said, looking at Chris. ‘I’ve already spoken to Scott and the betas. When we’ve got him restrained, you will need to shoot him with this,’ he said, handing the printout to Melissa and what looked like a tranquilizer dart to Chris. ‘I’m giving you a spare dart to give to Allison. I believe she has her bow in her car. Melissa, you’re here because we may need a nurse, and he’ll trust you sooner than me. Ordinarily I would leave you with Scott, but two teams with archers will be strategically safer than one team of two archers covering the same area.’

Melissa held the picture up sideways, an ironic quirk on her lips. 'Is this animal what I think it is?'

Chris leaned over her shoulder to look. 'I think so,' he said, shaking his head in amazement.

Deaton clapped his hands, bringing them to attention. 'Are we clear on what to do?'

'Crystal,' Melissa murmured suspiciously.

.

Scott looked suddenly anxious when Chris told Allison to go with Melissa. Partly because it meant he wouldn't be searching the town with Allison, which was clearly what he had hoped to do. Partly because he would be with Chris, which, ex-hunter or not, he was not thrilled about. And partly because Chris Argent had referred to his mother as "Mel".

When Melissa whistled happily at Allison's shiny car, several years newer and a good deal prettier than hers, he tapped her on the arm.

'He called you Mel,' he said meaningfully.

'Everyone in college and med school called me Mel,' Melissa replied.

'No, I mean, that's practically a pet name. Are you two ...?' Scott looked pained. Melissa rolled her eyes and groaned. 'No, Scott, of all the ... oh, for goodness' sake, can you stop worrying about it? Chris is a very nice man and to tell you the truth, I have never really had an adult friend who I can just bitch to and have lunch with and who just *understands*. Crap, did he just turn around? I think they heard that.'

Walking ahead, barely an inch between them as Allison inclined her head and stifled a giggle, Allison tried to glance surreptitiously at her father.

'Did you hear that, dad?' she asked through her grin. 'You're a *very nice man*.'

‘Damn straight I am,’ Chris said flatly, and tossed Allison’s car keys over his shoulder, smiling to himself when he heard her catch them.

# Chapter 13

## Chapter Notes

This is a sooper long chapter. I kind of experimented with this burgeoning mystery element, so apologies if you get to the end and go "... wat"

But also let me know if you got to the end and went "EEE!!" :)

Just please let me know how I did, even if I did badly.

Stiles had never paid so much attention to the road. His eyes were everywhere, following every slightly-less-than-human shape, watching out for his father's squared-off silhouette, driving at ten below the speed limit and talking aloud on the scant chance that his father might hear his voice in passing and that they might find each other.

He felt idiotic and incredulous in equal spades. All of the seeming evidence, the torn pajamas, the windows. He had never even thought to suspect his father. There was no reason to. He supposed that he did get his morning grogginess from his father, so if his dad woke up on the bedroom floor he probably wouldn't think twice about it. And as for the pizzas found scattered around town, he had been pushing the salad pretty hard lately.

But the cars in the station car park? Why would the sheriff overturn two cars, blocking his own parking space?

Feeling slightly light-headed, Stiles slowed down and rubbed his eyes. With every minute that passed without anyone giving him a call, his spirits fell a little further. At first whenever fear threatened to overcome him, he had

been able to remind himself that his father had no memory of shifting, that he always seemed to end up back home and perfectly fine. No torn clothes, no physical damage. That was probably going to happen this time. He'd check his house, and his father would be there, napping on the couch.

But tonight just felt wrong.

Quick as a hare something ran ahead of the jeep, darted across the lane ahead and down the side of the road, kicking up dead leaves like embers flying from a flame. Stiles sat bolt upright and stomped on the accelerator. All fours. Bigger than him. Broad-shouldered.

Sheriff's jacket.

Stiles turned the wheel sharply and followed the direction his dad had gone in. He didn't see the street signs, didn't pay attention to what road he was on, he could have driven out into the middle of nowhere for all he knew but he didn't care. He needed to catch up.

He caught a glimpse of the jacket every minute or so, as if his dad knew it was him and didn't feel compelled to escape his pursuit. He went up a dirt road, up into Beacon Hills Preserve, and even though it was dark he didn't turn on the hi-beams out of fear he would alarm his dad, lose track of him, and then he remembered.

Taking one hand off the wheel, he picked up his phone and called Scott.

'I've found him. I'm at the preserve, I've managed to keep up but seriously, dude, I need you here stat. He's really fast.'

'Okay, we're on our way,' Scott said quickly. 'Whereabouts in the preserve?'

'Not too far off from the bridge.'

The creature in the sheriff's jacket slowed and took a corner, and Stiles followed. The leaf litter was difficult for the wheels to navigate and the car swerved, but Stiles didn't slow down. He couldn't lose him now. He just

couldn't.

The jeep, however, had different ideas. She sputtered sharply for an instant, made a terrifying keening, grinding sound, and then the engine died.

'No. No, no, nononono *come on*,' he pleaded, turning the key roughly, but he got nothing but clicks in return.

He turned the key another eight or so times, until his fingers start to hurt. Then he slammed his hands on against the dash board and screamed through clenched teeth, banging his forehead against the wheel. His heart jumped into his throat, and he let out a sob.

After a few seconds spent forcibly pulling himself together, Stiles opened the car door and got out. He looked around, listening intently for howls or the sound of running. He heard nothing.

Sucking his lower lip and stamping his feet to get his blood flowing, Stiles set off from the car and jogged in the direction he thought he last saw his dad run. He had no torch. He batted away the jarring futility as it rose up like a tennis ball in a pool, fighting to keep his mind clear. Even assuming the sounds the dying car made didn't alarm him and drive him away, Stiles knew he couldn't catch up on foot, but he had to try. Staying in the car and waiting was unthinkable. He had to be able to say he had tried.

He wasn't frightened, not as much as he probably ought to have been. But this was his dad, and he was responsible because he did not see it sooner, because surely there must have been evidence of some kind that he hadn't noticed because he was too caught up in himself, selfish, *selfish*

All too suddenly, a figure appeared in the corner of his eye, strong-jawed and boot-wearing and angular in the cut-out white and blue of the moon. Stiles saw the sheriff's jacket and the glinting badge first. For a heart-stopping moment he froze, hardly daring to believe. And then he saw the face above the stiff khaki collar.

There wasn't technically silence; a bird screeched briefly some distance

away, the wind rustled the leaves together with a sound like starched sheets, and the sound of his own breathing was suddenly harsh and audible and if he wasn't half-mad Stiles could swear he heard Derek's breathing too. But it felt like the calm before one fucktonne of a storm.

The moment was broken by a choked, angry sound, and Stiles realized he had made it.

'Oooh, jeez. He was supposed to be going out tonight with Scott and Allison's parents, so he *wouldn't* be wearing his work uniform. I can't fucking believe I fell for that shit!'

'Stiles,' Derek said, and on any other night that seductive voice would have paused Stiles' every movement and thought for the full split second the man needed to thoroughly demolish every emotional safeguard Stiles would have spent the day setting up, but that was *his dad's jacket* and Derek had practically *pulled him off a friggin' highway* for this wild goose chase.

'I don't care. Whatever this is, whatever you're doing this, just no. I am done,' Stiles said, swiping his hands like warning cards and backing away to his jeep. For every step back he took, Derek took two forward.

'No. Derek, seriously. I don't know or care.'

'Why I've got your father's jacket?' Derek asked pointedly. Stiles stopped dead still. He narrowed his eyes.

'You ... no. Tell me you didn't. Tell me, you *sick fuck*, that you did not b –'

'I did not bite your dad. I had to get you out here.' Derek huffed impatiently, and his expression, for a moment, was pleading. 'That was my part of the job. After meeting your dad on his way to see Mrs McCall and Chris Argent, and getting him to a safe place.'

Stiles blanked, unable to process what he had heard.

'I had to tell him. We had no time. Things were all happening in the wrong order, and we couldn't risk a shift in a public place.'

Stiles was still trying to process the first sentence. He shook his head and turned around, putting his back to Derek, and tried to think. He was furious that Derek had told his dad, that he hadn't been given a chance to see him, talk to him, put it in his own words as son to father, and he was relieved that his dad was (supposedly) in a safe place and he was confused as hell. He spun around again and fixed Derek with a semi-stern glare, latching onto the first discernible question that flew past in his brain.

'I still don't see what this has to do with you wearing his jacket.'

Derek, to his credit, looked to the side and stuffed his hands in the pockets of the jacket – it looked alien, like a costume on him – and when he looked back at Stiles it was with troubled eyes.

'This is my other part of the job,' he said. 'Making you shift.'

Stiles' mind, finally, caved. He blinked hard, brought a hand to his face, and cleared his throat. Then he pointed to himself. 'Not a werewolf,' he said frankly. 'Deaton said so.'

'Not exactly,' Derek said. 'He couldn't risk saying anything outright in case you heard the lie over the phone.'

Stiles growled, and stomped his foot, and he was past the point of caring if it looked childish.

'The only way Scott could begin to gain control over himself was *after* he became fully aware of his true nature,' Derek cut in before Stiles could say anything to rebuke him. 'You were also turned without being aware of it at the time, the only difference is, you always seem to return to the same place after shifting ... what?'

'You sound insane,' Stiles said. The truth was, it was a little bit painful to hear Derek saying it, because it sounded like mockery. And he knew now how he must have sounded when trying to explain his theory to the three betas, only to be told he was wrong minutes later by the resident respected

authority on things that go bump in the night. He would have sounded even more idiotic, because hey, it was him. ‘Seriously, dude, if this is a prank, it is the most awful, stupid, evil prank in the history of trying to make people feel bad.’

‘Stiles, this is not a prank. I’m serious. Deaton wasn’t prepared for you being right, or for you coming to see me and ... and then all of that happened,’ he finished awkwardly, as if something inside had slammed on the breaks.

‘Go on,’ Stiles said, faux-casual, burning with the memory of what he had so recently rambled with tears in his eyes and miserable puppy-love in his throat. ‘You can say it. I got *emotional*. I let my *teenage crush drama* get the better of me. So, let me get this straight, this whole elaborate thing, the story about my dad being the werewolf? That was all a trick to get me alone so you could lure me out to the middle of nowhere and make me shift? Do you even know how insane all of this sounds?’

‘You believed it a few hours ago,’ Derek pointed out.

‘I was out of my fucking mind a few hours ago,’ Stiles said. His voice was rising again, faster than he could bring himself down. ‘And I didn’t make a scene about it. I only believed that I was a were ... *something*.’

‘And you were right,’ Derek insisted. ‘But you never seem to change when you’re conscious, and by the time Deaton was sure, we had to find a way to get you out of town as quickly as possible, and make you believe for sure that you were human because that was the surest way to avoid a spontaneous transformation while you were feeling, as you put it, *emotional*. And all the while we had to keep you closely monitored. Do you understand?’ the look Derek gave Stiles was definitely pleading now.

‘The betas coming over,’ Stiles said numbly. It was slowly beginning to seep in, the possibility, and the moment he accepted the possibility he didn’t know what was going to happen, but he could feel something hurt and fierce rising from someplace deep inside. ‘They weren’t there to comfort me. They were there to restrain me, in case I shifted at home.’

All too abruptly, he was back to feeling empty, but he felt exasperated too. His father wasn't a werewolf. He had been right. And he was too late and too confused to be able to say "i told you so".

It was too much to ask, he supposed. There was no rest for the wicked, no peace for a dead man, no blah for a blah, he had been doomed since the moment he typed "werewolf" into google. There were no friends who would see him when he was tired and frightened and pull him into a fairy tale hug to fix his problems, offer him support when he was too reluctant and ashamed to talk about his broken heart. Everyone had an ulterior motive, and he was an idiot, and that was the way world was.

'Actually, that was a coincidence,' Derek said quickly, seeing Stiles shrink back in on himself against a tree. 'I knew they were going to see you, but they didn't know what I'd found out by that point. Like I said, it was all happening in the wrong order.'

Stiles closed his eyes and leaned his head back against the rough surface of the trunk. There had been a time when he had been afraid to show his bare throat to Derek. Then, there had been a time when he couldn't bare his throat enough.

*The bite.* That was it. The lovebite Derek had given him, which had mysteriously not been present the following morning. The one he had mentioned to Isaac.

Stiles finally released the sobbing laugh that he had choked back that afternoon, and when he did, he found he couldn't stop. The laugh grew, shrill and sad and unstoppable, and he bent forward to clutch his legs in his hands, hearing himself sounding feral and unhappy, less a laugh and more a guttural, pained yowl. He felt humiliated. Everything had changed, and it was all outside his control.

It wasn't fair.

'You asshole,' he said, sounding suddenly gravelly and heavy in his throat. Huh. He hadn't realized he'd laughed that hard. 'You fucked me, got me

pregnant, then dumped me. Isn't that always the way.'

When he lifted his head, red eyes and white fangs between warily parted lips met his gaze. Instead of fear or surprise, his anger took possession of him. His upper lip curled back in a snarl.

Here was finally a problem, a source of pain, a source of rage that he could target. *Here* was an enemy he could fight.

## Chapter 14

He was all narrow straining muscle and flattened ears and a warning growing in his chest, not a dog's harsh growl but a low smooth rumble, the threatening sound of a tiger watching a keeper pass its cage. His hands were suddenly tense, not fists, no. Fists were for play-fighting. Stiles' shoulders rolled forward and his hands straightened out, and his claws struck out like switchblades.

Too soon, Derek was shifting back, dragging the wolf back by its collar, reining in his claws and teeth and challenge and *no*.

The animal wanted a fight. The animal needed a fight. Stiles needed a fight. He could have nothing else. He had to leave his mark.

A vision, white sunlight pouring in, warm, and a muscular arm draped over his middle, an unusually peaceful face framed by black hair pointing in all directions like fur on a stray dog and the comforting weight of firm, carefully maintained muscles and the furious unhappiness that came from knowing, that was no memory, that was a *dream*. A dream only a weak human child could entertain, one that needed to be stripped and shredded away. It all needed to go away, be torn away.

The rumble in Stiles' chest rose sharply in pitch until it was an animal shout, a single high-pitched wildcat snarl, but Derek only hesitated in his transformation for a brief moment before becoming fully human again. That unbearably human, plaintive expression. Stiles shut his eyes to it. He needed to stay angry. It was his only hope.

He dropped to all fours and his arms and hips popped into place as if he were falling back into his natural position. His clothes were too constricting, but he couldn't battle with them now. He had to lash out while there was still enough sour, bitter emotion in the air.

Stiles circled, but Derek didn't follow him, didn't turn with him. He left his arms hanging loosely at his sides. It only made Stiles madder to know that Derek wasn't even dignifying him with a defensive position. He wasn't even trying.

*You're not even worth trying for.*

Thoughts like the bite of a viper spurred Stiles into releasing another harsh challenging growl, a lightning-strike of a sound, and for a second he let himself believe that Derek had flinched a fraction of an inch.

Fine. If Derek wouldn't make the first move, Stiles would have to prove he meant business.

Feinting left, Stiles dug his claws into the ground and swung a leg behind Derek's knees to topple him. Derek landed heavily on his back, the air rushing out of his lungs and arms splaying out to spread the impact of his fall. He lay flat where he landed, as if in compliance. In frustration, Stiles pounced on top of him, barely pausing to admire the fact that, for once, Stiles was as big, as sharp, as full of contempt, as Derek. For once, he was the confronting one.

He knew he was leaving himself open to an attack, but he needed one. He wanted Derek to strike, to match his rage. Hovering above him, barely a hand's length between their faces, Stiles placed one clawed paw on Derek's chest. He knew in the back of his mind he could no longer talk. His mouth, his teeth, his tongue, weren't the same shape any more. But the message was clear.

*If you don't fight back, I could kill you.*

'Don't ask me to hurt you,' Derek said quietly. 'I can't hurt you anymore.'

Stiles growled like a chainsaw, unsatisfied, and pressed his claws into Derek's skin, shallowly penetrating his skin.

'*Condescending,*' Stiles managed to say thickly between his sharp teeth,

adding more weight to Derek's chest when he refused to get up. Minutely, Derek began to move, placing one hand then two on Stiles' thick forearm to try and alleviate the pressure on his chest. Little points of blood were seeping through his shirt where the layers, fabric and skin, had been pierced. Derek was biting the inside of his cheek.

Stiles snarled again and dragged his claws down by a couple of centimetres, feeling the tearing of flesh beneath his claws. Derek's eyes flew wide open and he seemed to be trying to see somewhere above Stiles as he panted sharply. Still he didn't move. His legs and shoulders were still, his body thrumming with the smell of pain and exertion and yet, not even a touch of panic.

But Stiles wasn't interested in making Derek fear him, because Derek's feelings were a lost cause. Stiles wanted a fight, a fight that he wasn't getting, and even as Derek panted and stared up into the middle of Stiles' forehead and gripped his forearm, and his muscles tightened up with the sheer effort of stopping Stiles from crushing his sternum, still Derek wouldn't fight.

*You're not worth fighting for.*

*He did not even try to stop you leaving*

*He did not even open the door because he will not talk to you, or love you, or give you anything, because all of the pain you feel, all of the loss, is your alone and he could lose you a thousand times and feel nothing*

*He will not fight for you*

Stiles retracted his claws and slapped Derek sharply across the face, leaving four shallow red lines from Derek's jaw up to his forehead. He leapt over him, landing on all fours ten feet away, and shook his head. He was so angry, but so futile, and he needed a good long run, he needed to run and run and run until everything hurt and he was far away and could just lay down and sleep the rest of his life away on a high-up ledge, so high no-one could reach him to wake him.

‘Stiles,’ Derek’s voice, hoarse, was in his ears and he flattened them against the sides of his head.

The sound of a twig snapping was dulled, but did not go unheard.

Stiles closed a third of the distance between himself and the crossbow before something white-hot tore through his right shoulder and he toppled to the side, squawking and whining in pain, clutching with seizing paws at the narrow black shaft protruding from his bloodied jacket as he felt himself go slow and sluggish.

The world, so sharp and defined and absolutely focussed, melted slowly into blurs and colours, and Stiles had time to recognize Derek’s angry growling.

‘Finally,’ he slurred, before everything went dark and vanished into oblivion.

# Chapter 15

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The first thing was light. A warm light, more yellow than white, so it couldn't be the hospital. The walls weren't blue, so it wasn't his own room, but there were bed sheets on top of him and a pillow, cool against the back of his neck, as if he had only very recently been laid down.

He tried moving his head to see more than the ceiling, and it was then that he realized how groggy and heavy he felt. He tried moving his arms. He felt sore, heavy, the way he felt after his very first and most strenuous lacrosse workout.

There were comfortably familiar smells, as well as some uncomfortably familiar ones, combined with the scent of shoes and lacrosse equipment and dirty clothes and toothpaste and library book paper and then he heard voices, swimming through the muddy waters of his perception, and someone appeared above him. Scott's mom.

'Hi there kiddo,' she said gently. 'It's good to have you back.'

*Where did I go? Why am I even here?* Stiles blinked slowly, and Ms McCall gave a small smile.

'When you're able, I'd like you to drink this. It's just water,' she said, and Stiles heard a full glass touching a wooden surface. Then Scott and Isaac, of all people, appeared above him, foreheads wrinkled and eyes wide in deep concern.

'Is he supposed to be this woozy?' one of them asked. Stiles' ears were going again, and he shut his eyes. 'Shouldn't he be moving?'

'It won't wear off for another hour or so,' Mrs McCall said, and her voice

was softer, as if she was further away. *No*, Stiles wanted to say, but his mouth felt full of cotton and his head was still a fish tank full of mud. Some unspeaking, understanding part of him wanted to be watched by a nurse, not by two rowdy puppies.

Puppies. That's right. Wolves. Werewolves. *Werewolves. Derek.*

Derek. Fuck. What happened?

Something covered his eyes, a towel, soft and dry and clean. 'Stay with him,' Mrs McCall said, and one of the boys said "of course" but Stiles was already trying to fight past the cloudy exhaustion to get to full consciousness. He must have groaned or wheezed, because suddenly there was weight on the bed at either side of him and at the foot of the bed and the smell of people was nearer, more there, and he became clearly aware of being surrounded.

'Stiles?' Scott's voice. 'Hey buddy. I'd get rid of the towel, but Deaton suggested it after you woke up and had a chance to see us. You're not used to your hearing and smelling yet, and we don't want to overload you in case you shift again or something.'

'Not that we couldn't handle that,' a feminine voice said, and woah, that was definitely not Isaac but it wasn't Erica either, nor did he think it was Allison. Was Lydia here? Was *everyone* here?

'Well, we probably could. You, Hawkeye and Nurse McCall would probably have to leg it to the car.'

That was definitely Erica's voice.

'I'm not Hawkeye, I'm Merida. We've had this discussion.' Allison, without a doubt.

'Main point is, if he shifts now, it's okay. He'll remember us, and even if he loses it, there's one of him and four of us plus an archer,' said a distinctly Boyd-like timbre. 'And anyway. His trigger isn't here.'

‘Don’t,’ someone hissed, and Stiles groaned again, more out of annoyance at being left out than anything. He opened his lips again, licked away some of the dryness in his mouth.

‘Eyes,’ Stiles croaked. His whole throat was sore. ‘*Off.*’

Someone chuckled in delight, and the towel was removed. Scott’s grinning face appeared again. Stiles must have been utterly dead to the world for two syllables to cause that much happy relief in his friend.

A weight had settled on his legs, and he managed to crook his head just enough to see a pair of jeans and pink shoes that suggested Erica had draped herself over his knees. Lydia appeared over Scott’s shoulder, then Allison, and when he looked at his other side there were Isaac and Boyd. He blinked at them, his only current method of communication.

‘He looks drugged,’ Erica said boredly.

‘He can sleep it off. We probably shouldn’t crowd him so much,’ Boyd suggested, but before stepping back he placed a broad, warm hand on Stiles’ shoulder.

‘We’ll stay right here,’ Isaac said, looking at Scott, almost as if asking permission. Stiles made what he hoped was an affirmative sound. Seeing them all here, for him, made him feel more comforted than the blankets did. But he could smell them all, and that was a new development, and not entirely a good one.

Murmurs floated around the room and, as he dozed off the chemicals, he practiced at grabbing phrases, sounds, and focussing on them, holding them, letting them go like strands of long hair hovering in water.

‘... thought love was meant to be an anchor, not a trigger ...’

‘... where I left my shoe ...’

‘... just pulled me aside the other day and said some weird stuff about how it’s hard to be a dad but he tries to be there for me, because that’s his job ...’

wonder if Stiles will remember that I shot him ...’

‘... but if you multiply it over the nine ... my god I am so glad I’m not your study buddy, your math is awful ...’

When Stiles was able to turn his head more or less freely and move his fingers and toes, someone was curled up on the bed to his left, hand gently resting on his chest in attentive affection. From the scent, he guessed Isaac. That earned a smile from Stiles, and a pleased hum from someone further across the room.

He couldn’t quite isolate smells the way he isolated sounds, but he wasn’t sure he wanted to try. Scott’s room was a plethora of stinky boy stinks. But seriously, how often did the guy wash his socks? Given that Scott could smell all of this himself, Stiles decided that he didn’t have an excuse.

Within an hour, he was able to move his arms and legs and talk a little more freely. Scott propped him up with another two pillows and helped him drink a few mouthfuls of water, and some of the numb dry ache was worked out of his mouth and throat.

He remembered anger. Overpowering, barrelling-ahead anger, unlike anything he could remember feeling. Stiles wasn’t an angry guy. This was something new, archly thorny and dangerous within him, and while he was calm now, he knew it was only sleeping. As he lay back in Scott’s bed with Isaac cuddling into his side and the others only leaving intermittently to get a glass of juice or go to the toilet or make a phone call, tired and lead-limbed, he could feel it, deep down in his gut, in his soul. Something big bad. Something prowling and growling, patiently awaiting its chance.

‘You okay?’ Isaac mumbled into his ear, pulling Stiles from his half-asleep, ominous dream. Stiles turned his head and grunted something noncommittal.

‘If you’re worried, it’s okay,’ Isaac said. ‘Most of us understand that feeling. Even though we were all fully aware and wanted it, it’s still pretty huge. But you’ve got well-informed friends. And since it was Derek that

turned you, you've got a pack too.'

That earned a low rumble from Scott.

'What? It's true,' Isaac said. He leaned up on his elbow and looked down at Stiles. 'Everyone's been avoiding his name like it's a dirty word since you woke up, but you don't deserve to be treated like some fragile scared little animal. At least, that's what I think,' he said, glancing across the room to challenge anyone who might disagree. Boyd and Scott were returning his look with quiet disapproval, but Erica and the human girls began to look thoughtful.

'Whatever complicated shit is going on between you and Derek, we all love the idea of having a friggin' *cat* in our wolf pack. We'll be your support network.'

'Maybe that's not what I want,' Stiles said, slowly and thickly, but with as much decisiveness as he could muster. 'Maybe I'm an omega too.'

Scott pursed his lips to try and hide his proud smile, but it just made it look like a smirk. Isaac looked a little hurt, but the others looked as if they had been preparing themselves for Stiles' decision to go solo.

'I appreciate you guys being there for me,' Stiles said, trying to soothe the plain rejection on Isaac's face. 'And I think you're awesome. It's just ... attacking the alpha is probably not the best way to join a pack.' Foregoing the whole sexual-emotional history thing, of course. 'And I'd like some time to get to know, you know ... myself.'

'What does that even mean?' Isaac asked, still looking hurt.

'It means he needs his space,' Lydia said, in her best "duhh" voice. 'And he did kind of *only just discover* he's a mountain lion.'

Stiles' eyes bugged out and he dragged himself into a sitting-upright position.

'I'm a fuggin' *what?!*'

# Chapter 16

## Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for [notes](#)

The first time Stiles saw his dad since he'd walked out the door that fateful night, he was carrying a paper take-out bag with curly fries inside. Stiles could smell the curly fries across Scott's stinky boy bedroom. He could also smell a burger.

'C'mon,' he'd wheezed, trying to smile. 'I thought we were trying to eat healthy.'

The last time he'd seen his father, his entire world had looked different. Another oddly familiar smell reached his nose. His father placed the foil packet next to the bedstand, and sat next to him.

'You forgot to take them with you when you jumped in the car. I should have put them in your jacket or something, I'm sorry ... I'm so sorry, Stiles.' Stiles could tell it wasn't just about the meds.

'It's okay.'

'It isn't.'

'Hey, *you're* supposed to be comforting *me*.'

Cue the squeezy, insecure hugging, and Stiles couldn't bring himself to care. He had been fearing for the man's life only twelve or so hours ago, and while he could barely lift his arms to return the hug and his mouth tasted like sawdust, his dad was here, his dad knew what he was, and his dad was hugging him.

He ignored the foil packet. He didn't think he'd be needing them anymore.

Talking to Melissa McCall and Chris Argent, two unexpectedly hugely helpful people, solved his main confusion. He hadn't been able to smell or hear things before Derek deliberately triggered the change (even thinking his name made his chest hurt, but reminding himself about priorities helped a little), but apparently Adderall does that.

'It's a stimulant,' Scott's mom had explained. 'It's meant to help you focus. If Scott had regularly been taking Adderall when he first shifted, he would have been able to cut through and ignore all the extra stimulus without noticing too.'

Curse the ADHD, bless the ADHD, and especially curse and bless his fucking meds.

Rinsing his mouth thoroughly with a glass of water helped to get rid of the layer of sawdust taste, and Stiles whooped (weakly) for joy at the scent of curly fries blooming from the opened paper bag. Scott tried to tell him not to get grease on the bedsheets, but Allison just grabbed his arm and dragged him, and the remaining teen stragglers, out of the room. There was a strangely peaceful atmosphere then, almost like normal father-son time, as Sheriff Stilinski shared out the contents of the bag.

Stiles saw his dad staring at the burger for a moment, before glancing up and smirking shyly.

'You can has cheeseburger?'

Stiles launched himself and his dad exploded into a dad-joke induced belly laugh.

When Stiles left Scott's house, he anxiously covered his mouth and nose with his sleeve. He could practically hear Allison and Lydia rolling their eyes as they followed him out the door.

'It's not really that bad,' Scott said, coaxing Stiles' sleeve away from his face. 'Everything's just sharper. It's probably not even as bad for you, because you're a cat, not a dog.'

Isaac, Erica and Boyd were leaning against the sheriff's car. Stiles received a hug from each, feeling warmer even as the chill evening air gave him goosebumps. His legs were still a little weak. His dad had lent him his own jacket, the first time he'd done such a thing since Stiles was knee-high, and as he bundled into the car he was overcome, and he knew he'd get used to the unfamiliar degree of familiarity, recognition on a higher level, eventually but he didn't really want to. He felt glad he'd tucked the Adderall into his pocket at the last moment.

Someone reached in through the window and petted his head, and then the car was pulling out of the driveway and they were going home, and Stiles faced his nose to the open window and let a thousand cold scents whip by.

A particular one reached his nose and he whipped his head back, startling his father into slowing the car down.

'What is it? Are you okay? Do you feel sick?' and there it was, the concern bubbling beneath the surface. His dad did just find out he was a were-thing, after all. But the concern was *for* him, not *about* him. He let himself find relief in that. His dad wasn't afraid of him.

He didn't know how he'd cope if his father was afraid of him.

'Just smelled someone I know,' Stiles said, winding up the window.

When he opened the door to his own room, Stiles couldn't deny he felt better. There was something incredibly reassuring about being surrounded by his own socks and shoes and possessions. His dad left him in the doorway and went to his own room, and the house wasn't quiet or dark the way it usually was when it had been empty for hours but full of thrumming sound from outside, and the clock quietly ticking down the hall and the trees outside and it was all a bit muffled but audible. Stiles sighed and kicked off his shoes and tugged off his jeans. He would just have to get used to this.

Laying down in his bed, Stiles suddenly wished he had asked someone to come home with him.

Blue eyes, black hair, everything sharp and aggravated blunted down and softened under the weight of sleep. Gentle, even breathing, and the shared heat under the blankets of a good tight snuggle. Stiles couldn't even remember fantasizing about cuddling Derek, but the second he lay down it hit him like a memory, scent included. He could smell Derek on his sheets, and as much as he told himself it was his imagination, it just wouldn't leave him alone.

*I'm a were-cat. Come on. Bigger fish. Bigger fish. Bigger ... fuck.*

Stiles sniffled and battled down a sob, then got up to rummage around for his phone, but not before tearing the sheets off the bed and replacing them with new ones.

When he lay back down, he called Scott and decided that he was going to make himself worry about the next thing on his list of shit to worry about. Scott picked up on the third ring. In the car, soon before pulling up the driveway, Stiles' dad had said in as casual a voice as he could manage that he was going to be getting coffee with Chris on his day off. The fact that he was referring to him as "Chris" and not "Mister Argent" was enough cause for concern.

'It's your mom's fault for starting this,' he grumbled. Scott made a few sounds of protest, but Stiles cut in before he had a chance to say a word. 'My dad is going on a man-date with Chris Argent.'

Silence. Then hysteria.

'Yeah, I know. Laugh it up. You know what probably talk about? Us. They are officially a werewolf babies support group. How is that funny??'

'A *man date*??'

'Yes, as in, they're going and getting drinks together.'

'Hey, maybe if your dad and Allison's dad become a couple, I won't have to worry about him becoming a couple with my mom. Then me an Allison

won't be brother and sister!'

'Oh my god, don't sound so excited! Just no. You are the worst friend ever.'

'Come on, be supportive. I think they'd make a great couple,' Scott sniggered. 'They could get a joint gun magazine membership.'

'No.'

'They already have matching haircuts.'

'*No.*'

Stiles hung up and ignored his phone when it started to buzz moments later. He tried tossing it across the room, but that didn't help. He could hear the buzzing, feel the vibrations, as if it was right next to his head. He rolled over and pulled the pillow over his head.

The phone stopped buzzing and he managed to relax a little, even though he knew he was being moody. He was beyond caring, at least for now. Maybe he'd apologize in the morning.

He didn't know how much time had passed when he heard the window open, but he knew instantly who it was, and his whole body tensed. A low rumble began, his own rumble, and he bared his teeth even as his head was hidden beneath the pillow.

He had never wanted to see someone and wanted to run away so strongly, so simultaneously.

'What. Are you doing here.'

He could feel the changing shape of his teeth and he was afraid because what if he shifted in the house? What if his dad came in? What if he tore up his room? What if what if what if?

A hand was placed gently on his side and his whole body jolted as if

electrocuted. The hand was removed. After a hesitant, tense moment, the bed dipped as a body lay flat on the narrow strip of mattress between Stiles and the floor.

‘So ... I’ve got some explaining to do,’ Derek said stiffly.

## Chapter 17

Stiles gave Derek a few seconds, catching the scent of leaves and dead wood that he'd brought with him, because apparently tonight was a running-on-all-fours night or maybe Derek had enough common sense not to park his car near the sheriff's house. Stiles listened to the strained silence that followed that woeful understatement.

Then he bent sharply at the waist, sticking out his bum faster than Derek could react, and shunted him off the bed onto the floor.

The thud was followed by a hissed curse. Derek clambered back onto the edge of the bed to sit, feet firmly planted on the floor this time, and Stiles could hear him clasping his hands together and forcibly levelling out his breathing.

'Okay ... so *maybe* I deserved that. But you have to ...' Derek spoke quietly through his teeth with forced slowness, enunciating each word the way he did when he was mad, but Stiles could tell he was trying. 'I'd *really* appreciate it if you'd give me a chance to talk.'

*You had a chance. You had a shitload of chances.*

'I know this is probably too little, too late. But ...'

Stiles let go of the edge of the pillow, letting it fall back so his head was no longer covered. His teeth had gone back to normal. He was human-shaped once again. If Derek was willing to be a decent guy for a couple of minutes, sure, whatever. Stiles could afford to show he was listening. Manners didn't cost anything, yadda yadda.

'Letting you end it like that was wrong. I should have gone outside ... I should have talked to you.'

Stiles rolled onto his back and stared at the side of Derek's head, until Derek turned and looked at him.

'You know, I kind of wasn't the one who ended it.'

'Um ... yes, you were.'

'See, that's the problem,' Stiles said, sitting up and staring sullenly at the shape of his feet under the sheets. 'We were never dating to begin with. Yeah, we were making out every now and again, but aside from that, what were we doing?' Stiles asked, and he couldn't quite do eye contact properly so he stared at Derek's nose and chin and eyebrows instead. Derek didn't reply. Stiles huffed and tried to keep the lump in his throat from rising any higher.

'I mean, you never told me how you feel. And to be fair, I didn't say anything either. But you could tell, right?' he drew up his knees and wrapped his arms around them and made himself keep looking at Derek, just for the sake of not giving up or giving in. 'You could tell how I felt.'

Derek lowered his eyes and it took Stiles a moment to realize Derek was looking at his mouth.

'Hey. Eyes up here,' he said faintly. Derek looked up and that was worse, much worse, because they were looking directly into each other's eyes now and Stiles was hit by the fact that Derek was sitting right next to him, on his bed, uncomfortable and strange and Stiles had to shift over to put some space between them just to help battle down his nerves. Derek took that as permission to scootch further onto the bed, which annoyed Stiles a little. He knew he could probably kick Derek off again, but he really didn't want to wake his dad.

'I knew how you felt,' Derek murmured and wow. Stiles hid his face between his knees and tried not to blush any harder. 'And I know how you feel.'

In Stiles' heart he either wanted to throttle Derek or throw him down and

have his way, but he'd had his violent outburst already and words were surely a better way to find closure, but fucking hell, it was not fun.

'I didn't think it was a good idea, us being together,' Derek admitted. 'And you were right. I didn't want to make it official. Because that would mean no backing out, and then I'd have to stop and really look at what we were doing. And what it was doing to me.'

Stiles sniffed and pretended he wasn't tearing up. He didn't even really know why, whether it was sadness or confusion. He knew Derek's hand was hovering centimetres away from his back, could sense it. But a pat on the back? *Really?* Some part of Derek must have worked out how insufficient that was, because he removed his hand without touching Stiles.

'But I didn't want to stop either. Do you hear me? I didn't want to stop. I wanted to keep touching you. I couldn't keep my hands off you. You've been like this highly addictive sedative and I couldn't keep away, no matter how guilty it left me, knowing how incomplete and unsatisfied you were. I was *stealing* these feelings from you, and it's the worst thing I've done since slashing my own uncle's throat. You know what my anchor is, right?' he asked, hand now planted behind Stiles in the pillows, and Stiles could feel his breath on his neck but he didn't look up. His own heart was hammering.

'I can't feel angry when I'm with you. You can't imagine how confronting it is, relying on something like anger to keep control, and then to be completely unable to feel angry anymore because ... because, you calmed me down. You brought me peace.'

Stiles tried to wall up his racing thoughts but they just rolled over each other like scattered leaves in the wind, and he could not bring himself to believe what Derek was saying because he had committed himself, resigned himself, to believing that Derek just did not fucking care about him.

'I couldn't let you go. But I knew there was no way I could make you happy. I didn't want to be selfish. But I guess I ended up doing the selfish thing anyway, didn't I?'

Stiles knew it was not a question. He lifted his face a little and glanced through his lashes at Derek. Derek was looking down and away at his hand, but he was closer than he had been in what felt like a very long time. All Stiles had to do was lean over, and they'd be kissing.

Stiles lifted his head and took a deep breath. Derek looked up and there was a little spark of hope in his expression, muddled as it was with shame and frustration and discomfort.

'You could have made me happy,' Stiles said plainly. As he said it, he knew it was true. 'You did, in a way, for a while. When you were touching me. It let me believe you wanted me. And for the record I didn't want the whole roses-on-valentine's-day thing. I never wanted perfect, or normal, or stable. I just wanted for you to tell me, I dunno. That you cared about me. Liked me. Anything.'

'I'm not so good with words,' Derek said wryly.

'Three words, Derek,' Stiles said flatly, holding up three fingers for emphasis. 'I. Like. You. That is literally all it would have taken.'

Derek dropped his head onto Stiles' shoulder and Stiles couldn't help flinching. He didn't push Derek away.

'I kept thinking you could do better. I kept thinking that being with me would just put you in more danger than you were already in. I kept thinking of all these excuses not to commit, but the fact is, if you told me you wanted to date, I would have said yes in a heartbeat. I would have given you roses on Valentine's Day and I'd sit down for dinner with your dad and I'd ... I'd endure anything. That was what I thought you wanted to tell me, when you came to the house the other day. I thought you were gonna tell me you wanted to take it to the next level.'

Stiles sat in the silence that followed that slightly garbled, pent-up word vomit and rubbed his eyes until little points of light danced in his vision.

'You called it a teenage crush drama.'

‘Because you said some shit about needing more time and getting a second opinion. I thought you changed your mind as you were driving up, and that you were going to ask Scott, or something.’

Derek sounded slightly humiliated, as if he was only just realizing how petulant it sounded. He didn’t lift his head from Stiles’ shoulder.

Slowly, it dawned on him. Derek had been excited to see him because he thought Stiles was going to ask him out officially, and then got angry because he thought Stiles had gotten cold feet.

Derek had been waiting for *Stiles* to ask *him* out. To take the dilemma out of his hands, and make the decision for both of them.

## Chapter 18

‘You ... *are such* ... an idiot.’

‘I know.’

‘You could have diffused the whole situation by telling me you wanted to date me.’

‘You were mad at me. You thought I was a jerk.’

‘I told you I didn’t think you were an asshole.’

‘But you *thought* I was a jerk.’

‘You were being a jerk.’

‘I know.’

Stiles felt a smile slowly spread across his face and tried to wipe it off. He failed. He felt the weight of Derek’s head lift off his shoulder, and scrunched up his face to try and get rid of the smile.

‘What are you doing?’

‘Shut up,’ Stiles grumbled, and looked at Derek’s pitiful, frowning face. He collapsed into a giggle fit, sinking down into the pillows and covering his face again with his arms, rolling over so his back was to Derek, anything to smother the completely inappropriate laughter.

But then something warm was wrapping around his waist and plastering itself to his back, and he slapped noncommittally at Derek’s hands but Derek only spooned him closer and pressed his face against the back of Stiles’ neck and shoulder. He could feel the stubble through his t-shirt.

‘You’re not allowed to do that,’ Stiles said, trying not to sound childish.  
‘I’m a minor.’

‘You’re laughing.’

Stiles wriggled onto his back, and Derek’s arms remained around his waist.  
‘Should we even be this close? We’re not even dating.’

‘I want to change that,’ Derek whispered. ‘I want to date you.’ Then, as if realizing what he had finally said out loud, Derek propped himself up on one elbow and looked sternly down at Stiles, both of them transfixed. For a moment, the sound of their heartbeats melted into each other and thumped in time, making Derek’s stern expression crack just enough to let a sliver of tenderness shine through.

‘Stiles. Will you be my boyfriend?’

Their heartbeats went out of time again, which was the only warning Derek got before Stiles pulled him down into a frantic, long time coming kiss.

They rolled into the middle of the bed, laying tangled side by side and joined firmly at the mouth, and Stiles felt as light as if the weight of a whole planet had been blown away off of his heart and lungs, right out of his ribcage.

Derek’s hand moved to cup Stiles’ cheek and stroke down his neck as their ankles and knees bumped together, arms and legs negotiating to wrap as tightly and comfortably around each other as possible, and somehow they had never been as close as this even when they were half-naked and jerking each other off. Even as their teeth clacked together and they moved their lips and tongues slightly out of time, a fumbling, sweet, work in progress kiss, Stiles could feel a purr building in his chest. It was their first kiss all over again. Only properly, this time.

Stiles pulled back to catch his breath for a moment.

‘That’s an enthusiastic yes, by the way.’

Derek beamed at him, and Stiles had to smile in return, because it was so rare to see a sincere smile on Derek's face and Stiles couldn't bear to waste it.

Derek cradled Stiles for most of the night, in between kisses and murmurs and the occasional rearranging of limbs. Stiles woke up at the crack of dawn to Derek dozing with his lips parted and his shoes kicked off the end of the bed. He looked so calm. He looked so sweet.

He looked so familiar.

Stiles prodded Derek's abs until Derek grabbed his arm and opened his eyes. The split second of tension was replaced instantly by a warm expression and a peck on the nose.

'I've got to ask you something,' Stiles said, tucking his face under Derek's chin and pulling up the blankets. 'It might sound weird.'

'Shoot.'

Stiles sucked at his lower lip and tried not to get distracted by Derek's hands running up and down his back.

'Have you ever ... I mean, did we ever snuggle? Like, before tonight?'

Derek's hands froze. Stiles slowly sat up, looking down at Derek suspiciously.

'Dude. No. Did you?'

'Did I what?' It was a futile attempt to delay the inevitable, and it gave Stiles half his answer.

'Did you sneak into my house while I was asleep, and snuggle with me?'

Derek huffed and rolled onto his back, and probably would have crossed his arms and put his frowny face back on if it wouldn't have looked ridiculous.

‘I told you I couldn’t stay away. But it was too intimate to do it when you were awake. I hadn’t even intended to curl up in bed with you the first time, it just sort of ... happened. You wouldn’t wake up when I shook you and you kind of took my hand and I just ... what? You’re staring at me.’

‘That’s somnophilia, dude. I don’t know, do we need to have a talk about consent or something?’

‘No. And like I said, the first time was an accident. Then, whenever I felt stressed nothing else worked, working out, running, nothing, so I came to you instead.’

Stiles was torn. It was so sweet. It was enraging.

‘You know ... if you’d told me *that* while I was yelling at you ...’

‘You’d yell at me more. I know how bad it is. I’m sorry.’

‘It’s cute. It’s really wrong, and next time something like this comes up you need to talk to me instead so we can both share the experience, but hey. In a twisted, bizarre sort of way, it says something about your feelings.’

‘Twisted and bizarre, huh?’

Stiles sank down on top of Derek and nuzzled his neck, trying to ignore the low purr emitting from somewhere inside him. It was like a soundtrack to his happy contentedness, filling his body and oozing out of his mouth and ears and head.

‘You purr like a motorbike.’

Derek scratched Stiles behind the ears, and it would piss him off if it didn’t feel so wonderfully, blissfully *goood*.

‘So did I make any weird faces in my sleep?’ Stiles asked, slightly dazed as Derek massaged his head.

‘No. But you drooled on me once. That was the worst, I think. Except when

I cuddled with you for a few hours the night you wore those stupid, flimsy pajamas. You move in your sleep a lot. I had to grab the front of the shirt to stop you toppling off the edge of the bed and it tore.'

'So that was your fault. I bet Deaton was thrilled when he was doing his tests to find your werewolf hair on a teenage boy's jammies,' Stiles said, trying and failing to sound accusatory. He lifted his head to look at Derek, and for the soft look he got in return he guessed he looked pretty happy-wrecked.

'I'd say it was *your* fault. You're a roly-poly sleeper,' Derek said. With a straight face.

'I'm a what sleeper?'

'Roly poly.'

'What?'

'*Roly poly.*'

'What?'

'Roly- for god's sake, Stiles.'

Stiles giggled. 'Your choice of words is too priceless.'

Derek scoffed. Stiles felt giddy and he didn't know if it was lingering tranquilizer in his system or if he was getting high off the fact that Derek; sullen, moody Derek, repeatedly broke into his house for snuggles.

'You're roly-poly,' Derek whispered, trailing his lips up Stiles' hairline. 'You're priceless. You're adorable.'

'You can stop, you know,' Stiles said, absolutely not meaning it.

'You're sexy,' Derek said, blithely ignoring him, 'you're cute. And you're *all mine.*'

He wanted to tell Derek that he could feel himself purring, but he didn't want to interrupt the flow of happy vibrating deep within. He just wanted to stay where he was, and never move ever again.

'It looks like I'm a cat person,' Derek said, absurdly fond, running his hands up Stiles' back, up the back of his shirt to massage circles into his warm skin. Without thinking Stiles sat up and lifted his shirt up over his head and tossed it to the floor. Then he looked down again and met Derek's eyes.

When he had sat up, he had rested his legs either side of Derek's thighs. He was straddling Derek. He was shirtless, and straddling Derek.

And Derek's heart had gone from leisurely to racing.

With a grin, Stiles placed his hands on the bed at either side of Derek's waist. Derek's pupils dilated, but his face was composed as he watched Stiles prowl right up, letting his body slink forward, milking the whole catlike thing for all it was worth. He sank down, just above Derek so that his neck and bare chest were right before the man's face.

He loved knowing that Derek loved his neck, loved knowing that Derek had a fascination with feeling Stiles' bare torso, touching, palming, memorizing him with his sense of touch alone.

Derek opened his mouth against Stiles' chest. This fierce need of Derek's, like an all-consuming fire, had once intimidated him. Now Stiles knew for sure, it had never just been lust. It had been passion.

Stiles pressed his body down as Derek gently closed his teeth on a nipple. He spread his legs further and started grinding down against the hard abs beneath him. Derek ran both hands smoothly down Stiles' back in response to grab two handfuls of his ass and pull him into a rhythm, canting his own hips up so their hard-ons were pressed together and coaxing Stiles into a kiss, probing and intimate, Stiles' hips now aligned with Derek's, dry-humping like teenagers (at least Stiles had an excuse).

Stiles was surprised to feel sharp teeth at his lips. He lifted his head and broke the kiss, and at the expression of alarm on Derek's face, he realized that sharp teeth he'd felt were not Derek's. They were his own.

'Have I shifted?' he asked quietly, wondering at the softness of the "t" caused by the interference of his longer, sharper canines. Derek stroked his cheek with the backs of his knuckles.

'Partially. Your eyes,' he muttered. Then he leaned up and kissed Stiles' lower lip, so tenderly that Stiles didn't move an inch for fear of breaking the spell of it. Derek then kissed the tip of his nose, and his eyelids. By the time he lay back again, Stiles could no longer feel his canines on his lip.

'There.'

Stiles collapsed onto Derek's front, hiding his face and digging his hands under Derek's shoulders to clutch the edge of the pillow. The purring had loudly started up again and he could feel it reverberate through his own chest being met by the chuckles coming from Derek. He tried to tone it down, but then he felt Derek's fingers kneading his back and relived the seconds-ago kisses, still tingling on his face, and the purr continued all on its own as if his happiness was knocking rapidly around inside his body like a rogue bouncy ball.

He gripped Derek's body between his knees and in his arms, pressing himself hard against Derek's front and fighting a sudden mad urge to rub his face all over that chest, that bellybutton, the front of those pants. He felt the sharp teeth again and held desperately to his sense of self, determined not to lose this moment as Derek closed his arms tightly around Stiles' body and lifted his knees to tighten the pressure of their bodies against each other and cage him in. It didn't matter if it was because Derek didn't want him to shift completely and jump out the window. Stiles relished in being held so tightly, in the pressure. He purred, and nuzzled, and nibbled at Derek's ear, and purred some more, and dragged his tongue up Derek's throat because he just needed to.

He realized he was still hard, and rocked against Derek's lap as he sucked at

his throat. He bit down gently, not enough to break skin but enough to sting, and felt the vibrations of Derek's breathy groan.

Not enough. He wanted *noise*.

'Not too much,' Derek said urgently, even as he squeezed Stiles' upper thigh and let him grind. 'Your dad's still home. He can't know I'm here. He can't find out like this.'

Stiles grumbled, reeling himself back in just enough to become human again (which took a few nervous minutes – it looked like Stiles was going to have to figure out how this whole anchor thing worked). Derek smiled sadly up at him, seated back in Derek's lap and no longer purring.

'We should probably continue this when we don't have to worry about someone hearing,' Derek suggested.

Stiles looked at the clock and raised an eyebrow.

'If you're willing to hang around, my dad is going to work in about half an hour.'

There it was. That smile again. Stiles responded in kind, and he was past worrying if he looked goofy.

He had yet to find his footing. Within the space of about 48 hours, too much had happened. He had gone from being permanently human boy to badass mountain lion boy. He had gone from single and pining to very much not-single and deliriously happy.

Stiles melted onto Derek and decided to stay put unless his dad went as far as to open the door. Another chuckle made Derek glance down and pat Stiles' shoulder. 'Why are you laughing at me now?'

'I'm not laughing at you,' Stiles said, nuzzling Derek's chest.

'Then what?'

Stiles wondered whether to say it out loud. Then he thought, screw it.

‘Moon Moon,’ he said in as serious a tone as he could manage, ‘has become Sun Sun.’